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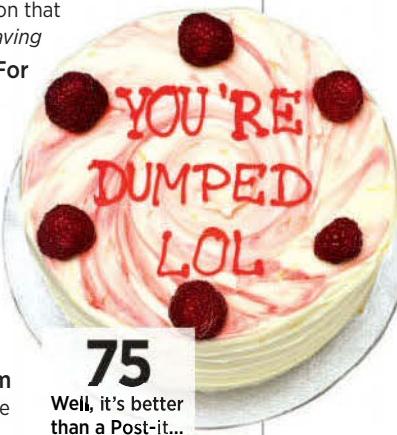
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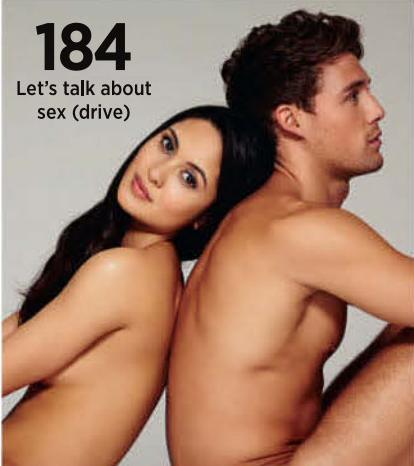
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'NO ONE SHOULD MAKE YOU FEEL INFERIOR'

I can still feel the prickle of fear that used to run up the back of my neck as I'd look at the clock early on a Sunday evening, knowing there was no escape from going to work the next morning.

It wasn't the job – I've always loved my work, but my boss was another matter. From being the golden girl, I suddenly couldn't do a single thing right in their eyes. And the more I was loudly doubted, the less able I felt, until it became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

So it was with great interest that I read our feature *When Your Boss Hates You* (see p80). Looking back, and with the courage that comes with no longer being in that situation, I can say that I should have been feistier and more confident – but

it's not
always easy
when you're
constantly
being picked
apart for

everything you do – and everything you *don't* do. How I wish I'd had access then to information and advice from career coach Jenny Blake.

It was vile at the time, and it took me a while to recover my confidence after I finally left (only to hear the bullying tactics had been turned on somebody else in the office as soon as I'd gone). I was lucky; although I took a pay drop when I moved on, it eventually led to a much better job and, years later, my old boss apologised for their behaviour.

My advice if you find yourself in such an awful situation is remind yourself of what you're good at, try to keep perspective on it so it doesn't affect the rest of your life, and be honest with yourself. Do you *really* need to keep working somewhere you're not appreciated and probably never will be?

I'd love to hear how you've coped in similar situations – let me know at cosmo.mail@hearst.co.uk.



Louise Court (Editor-in-Chief)



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**On the
COVER**



MICHELLE KEEGAN

We're loving Michelle's relaxed double-denim vibe. Here's how to copy her look...

Photographer Ben Riggott

Styling Sairey Stemp

Hair Matthew Wade at Carol Hayes Management

Makeup Sharon Ivey at Carol Hayes Management, using Bobbi Brown

Nails Zarra Celik at LMC Worldwide

Stylist's Assistant Lizzie Calow
Shirt Paige

Shorts Topshop

Earrings Dannijo

Bracelet Pamela Love

Get her style

ON A BUDGET



Shirt, £25,
Asos

Earrings, £12,
River Island

Shorts,
£28,
Topshop

Bracelet,
£12.50, Freedom
at Topshop

Copy her makeup

COURTESY OF BARRY M

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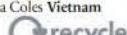
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VERSACE EROS POUR FEMME

THE NEW FRAGRANCE FOR WOMEN

Youniverse

Join the conversation by email (cosmo.mail@hearst.co.uk), Twitter, Facebook and at Cosmopolitan.co.uk



Embrace your relationship mistakes

I loved the Cameron Diaz interview, *Candid Cameron* (April) – especially the things she said about making mistakes in relationships until you learn a lesson. I'm not afraid to say I've made many mistakes. I learnt some lessons the hard way (sadly), some came more easily (thank goodness), and I know there are

some I've yet to learn (but will soon). Eventually, you get it right. *Kira, Wirral*

@ZaynabZubair

Great to see an article on how to buy a home (April), with info on saving and government schemes to support you.

Lauren, London

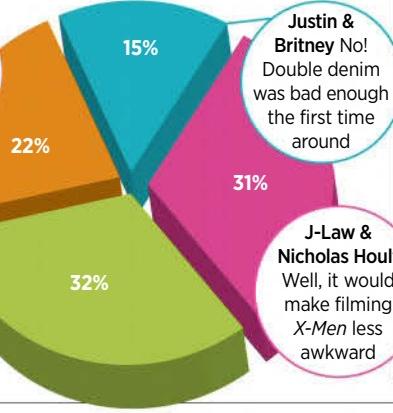
I really related to *Diary Of A Hair Chameleon* (April). I've never been able to stick to any one style for more than a year! There must be a way to stop this chopping and changing...

DISCUSS

WHICH CELEB COUPLE WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO SEE GET BACK TOGETHER?

Chris & Gwynnie
Is it possible to consciously recouple?

Brad & Jen Really?
After 10 years?
Come on guys...



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I CAN'T WAIT TO
GET HOME AND
TAKE MY FUCKING
BRA OFF

Cosmo put it out
there – and you agreed
in your thousands...

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#TRENDING

Six burning issues setting Cosmopolitan.co.uk alight this month

33 signs your mum is actually your BFF

► If *Mama* by the Spice Girls makes you tear up too, head to Cosmopolitan.co.uk/mums

What's it like to have TWO boyfriends?

► ... Apart from knackered, that is? Find out at Cosmopolitan.co.uk/polyamorous

Amazing lipstick hacks you never even knew existed

► Find out why hairspray is the lippy fan's best friend at Cosmopolitan.co.uk/lippy

How do I get a job I really love?

► Author and *Cosmo* fave Caitlin Moran has the answer at Cosmopolitan.co.uk/Caitlin

16 inspirational quotes to get you off your backside, stat

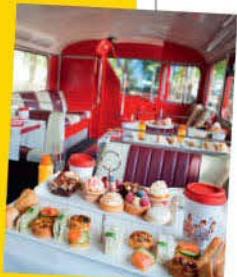
► "Progress is progress no matter how small" Cosmopolitan.co.uk/motivate

How much would your dream wedding cost?

► A LOT, apparently. Find out the damage at Cosmopolitan.co.uk/ouch

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YOUR BEST BEAUTIFUL™

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Making nails her business

THE SMART WOMAN'S GUIDE TO OWNING IT THIS MONTH

BY JESSAMINE MCUGH. PHOTOGRAPH RAY BURMISTON. HAIR AND MAKEUP VICTORIA BARNES. USING MAC. STYLING JARED GREEN. SHARMADEAN WEARS: COAT, CHICFREAK.COM. EARRINGS, JWMJAJA. NECKLACES, RING, BRACELET, ALL SHARMADEAN'S OWN.

The first thing you need to know about Wah Nails founder Sharmadean Reid, 30, is that she's absolutely fearless. What started as a hip-hop fanzine while she interned at fashion magazines turned into cult nail salon Wah Nails, loved by celebs from Daisy Lowe to MIA. Opening her first salon in east London in 2009 – aged 24, with no business training – was a huge punt. But Wah quickly became *the* place to hang out: playing host to uber-cool parties as well as fashion-forward nail art. Soon, a Wah Nails pop-up appeared in Selfridges, another was in the pipeline at Topshop, and Sharmadean was working her magic at events for Jimmy Choo, Nike, Marc Jacobs and Diesel. All this despite, "having no idea what I was doing".

Her initial gamble more than paid off; today Wah has a flagship salon in Topshop's Oxford Circus branch, and is well on the way to becoming a global brand. The new Wah London collection launched at Boots in March; she's produced two books – *The Wah Nails Book Of Nail Art* and *The Wah Nails Book Of Downtown Girls* – and is a regular on the mentoring, volunteering and public-speaking circuits. In fact, single mum Sharmadean [her son Roman was born in 2011] is so passionate about helping other women climb the ladder, she consciously recruits single mothers and women on benefits.

Her advice to budding entrepreneurs? "Don't waste time doubting yourself. If an idea has taken root in your mind, just get on with it. Even if it doesn't go further than your bedroom, at least you tried."



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CLAIROL

Christina Hendricks in Nice'n Easy 8G Natural Honey Blonde

*based on 12 months IRI colourants unit sales ending January 2015. ©2015 P&G

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Be that girl



Play time

Build up your fashion credentials with a quirky clutch bag

Clutches, from £415, Les Petits Joueurs at The Corner

PS

For more retro arm candy, try Asos, Topshop and Primark.

'No dream is too big'



Justine Durno, 25, was born deaf, but won't let it stop her from becoming a doctor...

I was diagnosed as deaf at two years old and given a cochlear implant at 12, which means I can hear some sounds – although not people's speech – via electric signals. My experience made me want to become a doctor, because as a deaf patient I know how problematic visiting your GP can be – you use the phone to make an appointment, listen to your name being called in the surgery, then have to communicate with your doctor. I knew I could help others in my situation, so I'm now in my third year studying medicine at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry.

My speech is good, and I'm great at lip-reading (you wouldn't know I was deaf), but studying is still hard. I'm strategic about where I sit in lectures, and use a note taker (another student) on ward rounds. Some lecture rooms have induction-loop systems so I can hear, and I use a special stethoscope. But I believe my disability will make me a better doctor – because I can't listen and write notes at the same time, patients have my undivided attention, which helps build relationships. When I work in a group, people have to look at each other, speak clearly and one at a time, which makes for a better team. My advice? Never give up – I applied to medical school three times before being accepted, and even completed an anatomy degree to boost my chances. Dream big!

• **Find more info for young deaf people at NdcS.org.uk**



Hannah Grammel, 29, is a wardrobe assistant for the musical *Wicked* in London

My job is to keep the costumes and accessories used on *Wicked* clean, tidy

and show-worthy, so the audience sees everything

looking its best. Costumes

are a huge part of *Wicked* and they're all incredibly detailed.

There are over 4,000 pieces in the show, including shoes, hats, gloves and jewellery; just

one dancer wears up to 105 items a night. They rotate, so

more than one actor plays each

character, so we have four or five copies of each costume. There's a lot of washing – it gets hot

under the lights – so we start the laundry from

each night's show before the first act's over.

Even as a little girl, I loved fabric. My mum

says that I always used to feel material; I'd say,

"Oooh, I really like this one." At shows as a

child I was always more excited by the costumes than the dancing!

I work as part of a team of four, but we have 'dressers' who get the actors in and out of their costumes, and they help too. We also

have somebody who does laundry full-time. We each

take responsibility for certain costumes. I usually work

on one dancer's feather-boa outfit – it always gets caught

on her top and I'm the only one who can mend it.

My 'office' is full of washing machines and haberdashery.

While the show's on, I stand

backstage – it can be pretty

nerve-racking. I once had to sew an actor into their costume in 30 seconds after a zip broke!

Best bit: Working on such amazing costumes.

Worst bit: The antisocial hours – my day ends at 11.30pm.

My mantra
WORK
HARD, AND
DON'T TURN
DOWN ANY
OPPORTUNITIES



"There's more to Aussie than hair." 
NEW

*Why should my hair have
all the fun
in the shower?*



NEW Aussie Body Wash

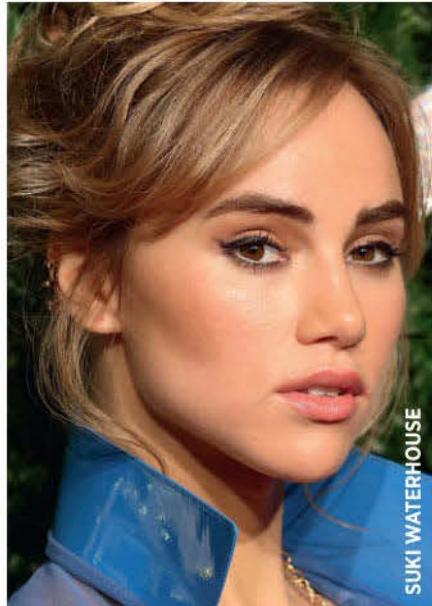
Be that girl



ALEXA CHUNG



FELICITY JONES



SUKI WATERHOUSE

Inside THE TREND

Celebs are doing it – here's how you can too

We tried it...

1 The key to working an overgrown fringe is to make sure it seamlessly blends into the rest of your hair so it softly frames your face.

3 Tease hair using a backcombing brush for height, then spray dry shampoo to add messy texture before shaping loosely into a beehive with grips.

2 Style the rest of your hair into a beehive by prepping it when wet with texture spray, then rough dry, making sure you brush the front section forwards onto your face.

4 Pull out a few loose strands. Turn your fringe into a grunge by parting it down the middle – and you're done!



"The perfect excuse for forgetting to have regular fringe trims. I love it!"

Beauty Assistant Lucy

Top trick

You can wear your hair down too – just make sure the ends are kept blunt but your fringe is soft around your face.



DAKOTA JOHNSON

The kit...

Shu Uemura Art Of Hair Liquid Fabric, £22



Kent Back-Combing Brush, £8.95

Boots Essentials Brown Hair Grips, £1.49

"There's more to Aussie than hair."



Guess what we've found out about Aussie girls?

*They've got bodies. Not just hair, but arms, legs,
the whole package.*

*So, after years of performing miracles
on their hair, we've decided to
shower (sorry) love and attention
on the rest of them. Meet our new
Aussie Body Washes.*

*Fragrant, creamy concoctions that'll
leave your skin feeling as **soft** and **smooth**
as a **smooth** landing
on the surface of a **smoothie**.*

*Turns out skin loves **exotic** Australian
ingredients as much as hair does.*

*So give your **bod** a taste of the bliss
your hair's been experiencing
all these years. After all, who wants skin that's,
green with **envy**?*



'Married men will only break your heart'



JAMEELA
JAMIL:
#justsayin

This month, our columnist Jameela Jamil explains why if a man's attached, he's not to be trusted...

My wife just doesn't understand me, I wish she was more like you... Other than, 'We don't need a condom – I can just pull out,' these are just about some of the most dangerous words that can ever be strung together by a man and fed to a woman. Should you ever have that sentence tied around your neck, beware. More often than not, it will strangle you and leave you utterly breathless.

I realised this as my friend lay at the foot of my bed, collapsed in a heap of Kettle Chips, pleading with her phone to ring. She was desperate to know: had he left his wife yet? Did he even care? Or was it just a sex thing after all?

If you've ever been cheated on, it's unlikely you have much sympathy for my friend's situation. Even if you haven't been cheated on, for that matter. But the thing is, she didn't wander into

a happy marriage and plot its demise. She just met a lovely, handsome man, who befriended her and then started to confide in her about his awful wife. How she's cold, how they never have sex, how nothing he ever does is good enough and how they have nothing in common anymore. A heady cocktail of immediate attention and attraction, followed by a stomach punch of sensitivity and vulnerability.

I've almost been there myself. A few years ago, I fell in love with a man before realising he was married. First, he told me they were separated. Then he told me they weren't separated – but that they hated each other and slept in separate beds. He said she was sleeping with her ex and was only using him for his money. My heart went out to this poor man. He was being bled dry by his evil wife, who had clearly tricked him into marriage!

I believed him but, thankfully, refused to have sex with him before he was divorced. I didn't want him until he no longer belonged to someone else. And thank god, because three years later, they're still together. In fact, they've just had baby number two and are, outwardly at least, 'happily married.' So I feel like maybe she wasn't *quite* as bad as he made out? Maybe he just needed some attention? Maybe he's just a *dick*.

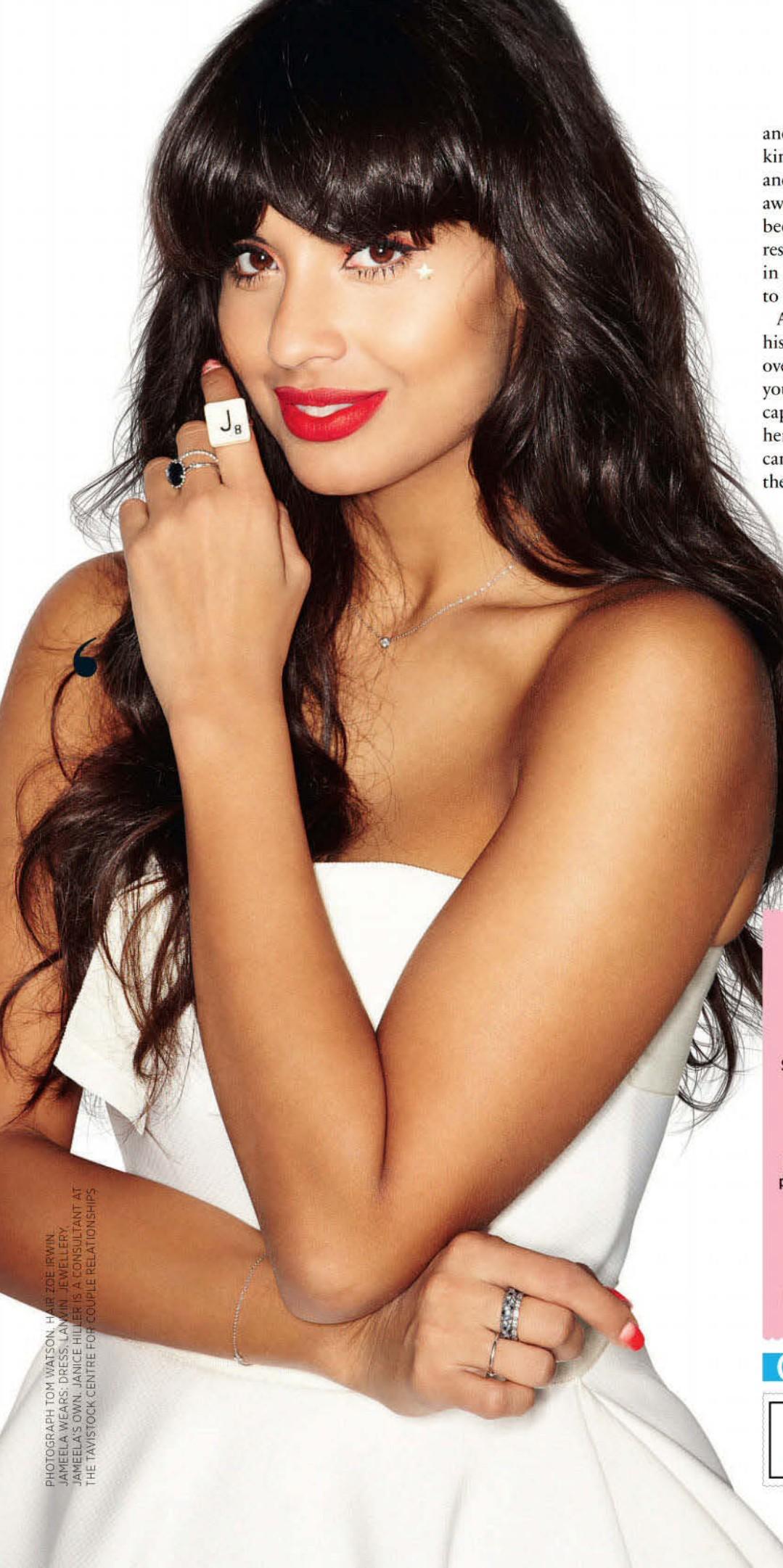
Some people cheat because they want to, because they can, because it gives

them a thrill, or because they just can't do long-term relationships. I'm going to get controversial here and say that monogamy isn't natural, especially not for men. It's a concept society birthed a few hundred years ago, even though men's DNA is busy telling them to spread the seed. From what I've seen, it's only love and respect that manages to anchor their little downstairs friend.

Now, I'm not saying *all* men are likely to cheat, or that all situations involving the unhappily married ones are the same. But in my experience, from watching friends and colleagues get involved in these complicated tangles, it's almost always the same script, just with a different cast. Unless they are officially single and living apart from their *former* spouse, it's just not good for your health or emotional well-being to get involved in any way.

And what about the other woman in the triangle? No matter how awful he makes her out to be, until you get to know her, you have no idea. She may be a lovely person waiting at home for him, totally unaware she's lost his interest, with a full heart and open arms. Picture her lying in bed alone, not knowing where he is, or what he's doing. Think of that sinking feeling you get in your chest when you start to suspect the man you love is up to no good and please, don't be the reason

*With
unhappily
married men,
it's almost
always the
same script,
just with a
different cast*



Be that girl

another woman feels that way. That kind of betrayal doesn't bruise; it scars, and sometimes those scars never go away. If that woman finds out she's been betrayed, she may go through the rest of her life suspicious and unhappy in love, constantly waiting for the rug to be pulled out from under her.

And if you watch a man deceive his wife (especially if he does it well, over weeks, months or even years), you'll never be able to forget what he's capable of. If he pulled the wool over her eyes so spectacularly, how on earth can you ever be *totally* sure he won't do the same to you?

If you want someone, you have to be willing to wait for them, and trust that what you have is real and strong enough for them to wait for you. If somebody jumps ship for you, that fact will always haunt you, because you'll know they're light on their feet. Spare yourself the paranoia and the pain, and walk away until the coast is clear. The bloodstains of another woman's broken heart are very difficult to wash out. And frankly, you *both* deserve better.

Should you risk an affair?

**Consultant clinical psychologist
Janice Hiller has this advice:**

Sadly, it's very common for men to have an affair to boost self-worth, for excitement, or because of relationship problems. But for a mistress, it's very risky. You can quickly get dragged into his issues and waste your emotions and precious time waiting for him. It can also be incredibly lonely if he chooses his wife (and/or kids) over you. Being a mistress can seem exciting – *if* you accept that it's just a fling. But it can also be a trap – and many women heading into an affair don't fully realise these implications. ♦

 Follow Jameela @jameelajamil

HAVE YOU BEEN THE 'OTHER WOMAN'?
HOW DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL? LET US
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RIVER ISLAND

#IMWEARINGRI

Be that girl

Simple suede

Nail two trends in one with a boxy jacket over an all-white look – a homage to '70s-style. Keep your top and bottoms fitted if you want to rock oversized outerwear.

Fashion Coordinator Holly Coopey wears: Jacket, £199, H&M. Jeans, £42, Topshop. Shoes, £39, Miss Selfridge. Jewellery, Holly's own

 Follow Holly @HollyCooop



Suede

Take on this trendy texture without looking like a displaced Wild West wannabe



Saint Laurent



Bohemian babe

Layer up simple wardrobe staples such as denim and jersey, throw on a statement waistcoat or even a kimono with suedette trousers, and just add heels for a night out.

Assistant Picture Editor Gemma Roberts wears: Waistcoat, £678, Citizens Of Humanity. Shirt, £155, AG Jeans. Vest, £30, Dagmar. Trousers, £38, River Island. Shoes, £65, Schuh. Bag, £205, Erin Templeton at Urban Outfitters

 Follow Gemma @Gemma_Lucia

The new pastels

Go all out in head-to-toe suede, in pretty, feminine colours and shapes.

Digital Fashion Editor Jess Edwards wears: Jacket, £100; top, £85; skirt, £95, all Oasis. Shoes, £56, Topshop

 Follow Jess @JessMessEdwards



Burberry



Be that girl

HOW THE A-list WEAR IT...



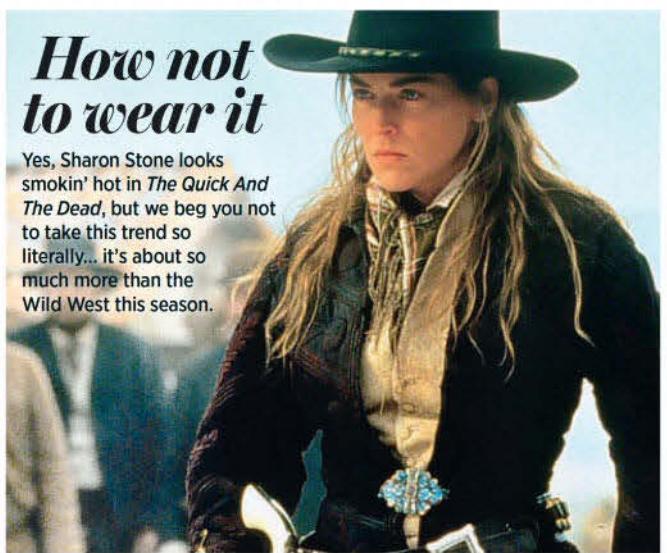
OLIVIA PALERMO makes a western look work with different colours and textures.



Keep up with what trends the Cosmo fashion team are wearing at Cosmopolitan.co.uk/howdoiwearit

How not to wear it

Yes, Sharon Stone looks smokin' hot in *The Quick And The Dead*, but we beg you not to take this trend so literally... it's about so much more than the Wild West this season.



Festival



Nice neutrals



Cute co-ords



Jackets



Psst...
The easiest way to buy into this trend is with strong accessories ♦



Miranda Kerr



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Collection from £49


SWAROVSKI



These dragon-hatching fantastical females are an inspiration

Girls of Thrones

It's season five, Game Of Throners, and we've learnt so much more from its female leads than your average TV heroines could have ever taught us



Life lesson #1 There's no such thing as a 'man's job'

BRIENNE OF TARTH In GOT world it can be pretty rubbish to be a woman, which is why we love bad-ass Brienne. Treated as an outsider just because she's a female knight, Brienne craves equality and constantly proves her strength. A true *Cosmo* girl.



Life lesson #2 Be your own hero

DAENERYS TARGARYEN

In her quest to claim the iron throne, she's conquered cities, freed slaves and – let's not forget – hatched three dragons. She may have the hair, but she's no Disney princess. Now, if only she could teach us to nail that fishtail plait...



Life lesson #3 Never give up on your dreams

MARGAERY TYRELL

She's been widowed twice, but never gives up on her mission to be queen. Even when her last husband was killed at their wedding reception by her own grandmother, did she weep into a tub of Ben & Jerry's? No, she moved on to his brother to keep that dream alive. (Disclaimer: we do not recommend rebounding with an ex's siblings.)



Life lesson #4 Stand up for yourself

CERSEI LANNISTER

This lady doesn't take rubbish from anyone. While we'd never go around threatening to strangle people in their sleep, a bit of Cersei's kick-ass courage wouldn't go amiss next time our friend forgets to pay back that tenner.



Life lesson #5 Don't forget your friends

ARYA STARK

We feel for Arya – she lost her family and spent a season sharing a horse with the Hound. No wonder she has a death list of those who've wronged her. We love Arya's loyalty; just don't give her the number of *that* ex.

• **GOT season five is on Sky Atlantic from 13 April**

BAROMETER

All over it

REDEFINING THE GIRL BAND

Nailed it, '90s style! Feminist-fronting attitude and insanely addictive new single *Preach* – just how much do we love M.O.?



FOODIE LOVE

Stella Newman's novel *The Dish* (£7.99, Headline) combines our two dearest loves: food and romance. As restaurant critic Laura Parker falls in love, we discover she's keeping a big secret...



CANDLES WITH CONSCIENCE

100% of profits from Aveda's limited-edition Light The Way candle go to WaterAid, to fund clean-water projects in developing countries. £16, Aveda.co.uk

So over it

HEALTHY DINNER STRESS

Never be stuck for ideas again with nutritionist Madeleine Shaw's new recipe book *Get The Glow* (£20, Orion). It's full of colourful, nutritious recipes you'll love trying.





The Show

JANE THE VIRGIN

Granted, the premise is a little far-fetched (religious Latina virgin Jane Villanueva finds herself pregnant after being accidentally inseminated during a gynae check-up), but this new series is so warm and funny, you quickly won't care. Gina Rodriguez is awesome as Jane, a woman navigating the life-changing news with her shocked-but-adorable family, boyfriend and, um, her accidental sperm donor (!). It's little wonder she won a Best Actress Golden Globe for her role earlier this year.

Airs on E4 this month



The Film

WHILE WE'RE YOUNG

Throw Ben Stiller on screen with *Girls'* wonderfully awkward anti-hero Adam Driver and two Hollywood generation definers chest-bump in an awesome way. New Yorker Josh (Stiller) is married to Cornelia (Naomi Watts), but when they start hanging out with a hipster couple half their age – Jamie (Driver) and Darby (Amanda Seyfried) – they discover they've got a whole lot more to learn about staying young than how to twerk. The scene where Josh goes hat shopping will have you in creases, *Zoolander*-style. Our take? The genius casting makes you take a close look at your own relationship/age crises too. Very cool.

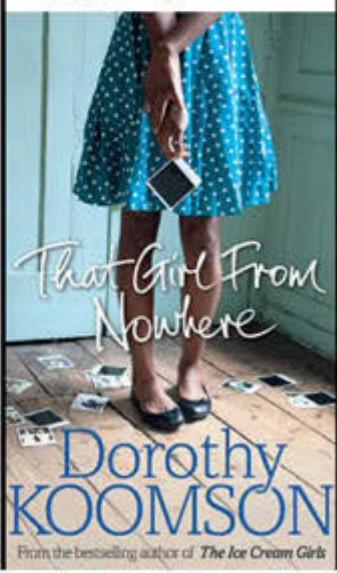
Out 2 April



The Book

THAT GIRL FROM NOWHERE BY DOROTHY KOOMSON

Clemency Smittson has upped and moved to Brighton with a broken heart, a grieving, overanxious mother and a butterfly-painted box full of memories. She's determined to build a new life for herself, even if there are unanswered questions in her past – such as why she was given up for adoption. A chance meeting in an old-people's home forces her to confront her past – but if you think this is another story about a woman tracing her birth family, you're mistaken, as the secrets begin to unfold one by one and ripple through the characters' lives. In classic Koomson style, before you know it, you've been up most of the night saying, 'Just one more chapter...' But trust us, the eye bags are worth it. *Out 9 April (£12.99, Century)*



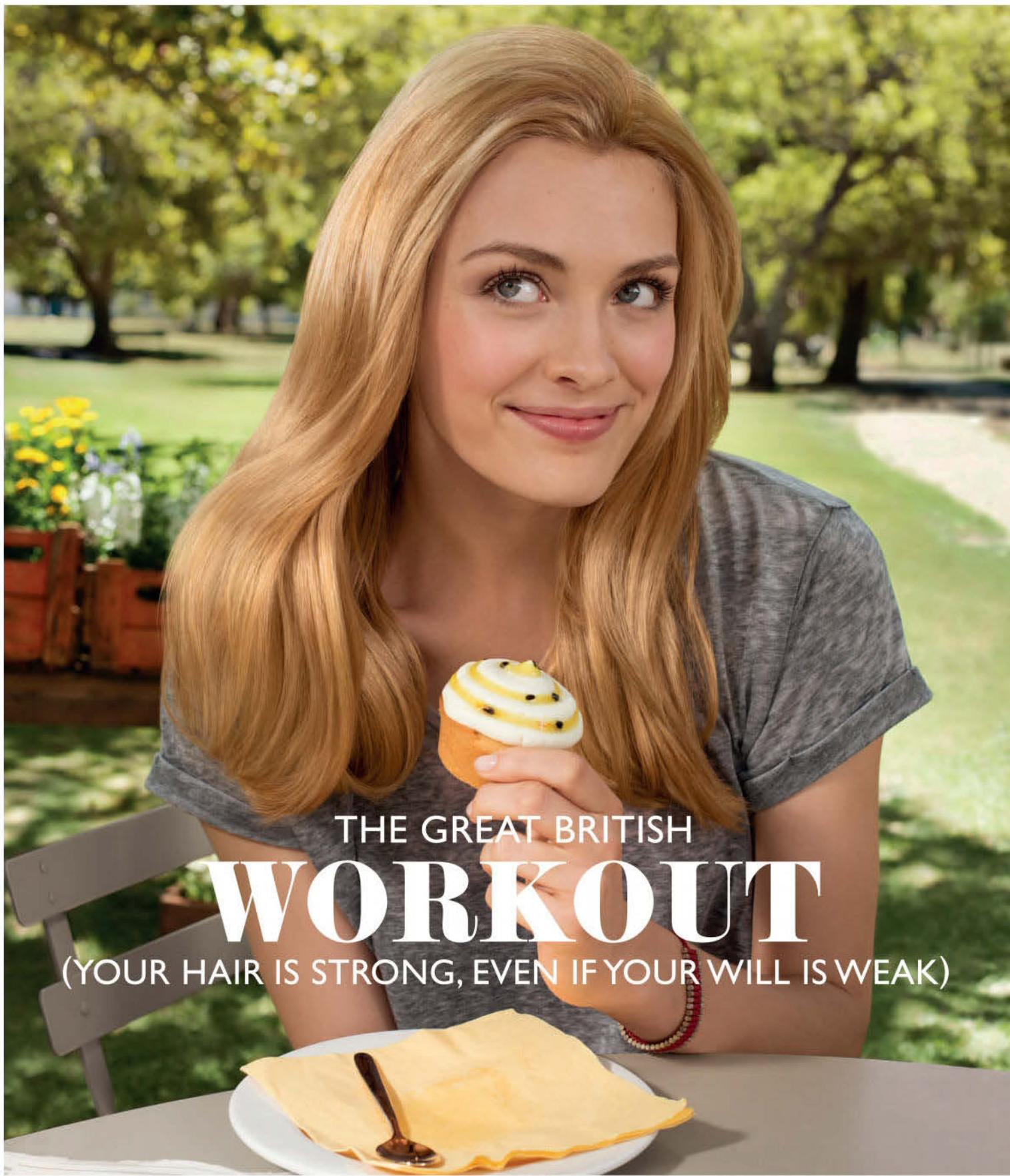
The Album

FROOT BY MARINA AND THE DIAMONDS

Or 'the perfect soundtrack to stare out of train windows to,' as we've christened it. On *Froot*, Marina's honed her sound, best-known from hits such as *Primadonna* and *I Am Not A Robot*, to include more haunting tracks. Turn up the volume on *Forget* (our favourite), an anthem for moving on after bad times, and *I'm A Ruin*, a heartbreak track that goes deep. Rather than preaching revenge, Marina's all about breaking free. Stylish, pretty and filled with MATD's trademark '80s twinkle, this belongs on your playlist.

Out 3 April ♡





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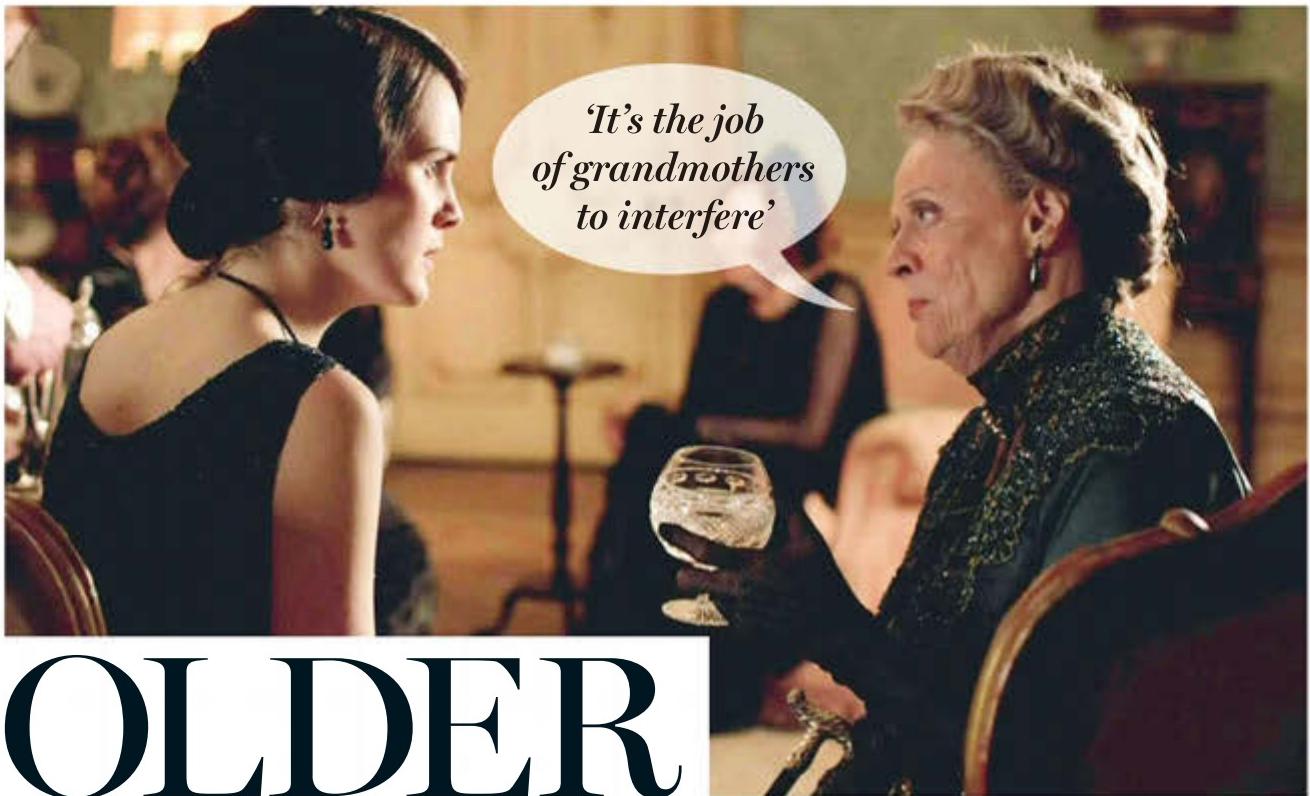


fiat.co.uk

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Confessions

Because it's good to share... right?



OLDER NOT WISER

Wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age...

Lust for life

My grandma and I were having a really nice, relaxing time on holiday in Costa Rica. Just as I was ordering a couple of cocktails from a very young and attractive waiter, my nan piped up with, "Ooh, haven't you got lovely come-to-bed eyes!" I don't know who was more embarrassed – me, or the poor lad who'd just been hit on by an 85-year-old...

Emily, 25, trainee nurse, Suffolk

Forces' sweetheart

When I took my long-term boyfriend (who's in the RAF, which means he

spends a lot of time abroad) to meet my grandma, she asked whether he was, "the 'Army one' or the 'other one'." Gobsmacked, I explained to my grandma – and my horrified boyfriend – that there was no 'other one', but she wasn't having any of it. I had to spend the next few days reassuring my traumatised boyfriend that no, I hadn't been cheating on him while he was abroad. The worst part is that my gran is still *convinced* I was two-timing him – and always asks me about my 'bit on the side'. I have no idea where it came from... mortifying!

Megan, 21, fitness instructor, Liverpool

Walk of shame

When my grandad took us to McDonald's, he couldn't quite grasp the concept of a drive-through. Instead, he parked up at the first window, got out of the car and *walked* to the next. When the server told him it was 'drive-through only', he turned, pointed at his car and said, "Well, what do you think that is – a knitted giraffe?!" We ended up getting fish and chips on the way home instead.

Charlotte, 25, sales assistant, Bristol

You're fired

My grandad likes to think he's pretty cool and up to date with technology, so last month he invested in an iPhone. But we soon realised he ›

hadn't quite got to grips with using it properly – it turns out that for weeks he'd been making and receiving every call using the speakerphone feature. The reason? He'd seen the contestants on *The Apprentice* doing the same and didn't realise it worked like a 'normal' phone too. Guess he's not such a model silver surfer after all!

Lucy, 24, hairdresser, Essex

Catty remark

As she's grown older, my nan has stopped filtering what she says. One day I was watching a Meg Ryan film with her and my mum (her daughter-in-law) when she turned to Mum and said, "You know what your hair reminds me of?" But instead of saying Meg Ryan – which we expected – she said, "An old cat!" Talk about harsh! I'm hoping Nan doesn't start evaluating *me* next...

Cami, 30, doctor, London

Supermarket display

My granny always used to say her clothes would "see her out", instead of buying replacements, no matter how old or tatty they were. One day her thrifty attitude backfired when her overstretched, decade-old knickers fell down around her ankles in Sainsbury's. Cool as a cucumber, she simply whipped them off and put them in her handbag. I guarantee she's still got them though!

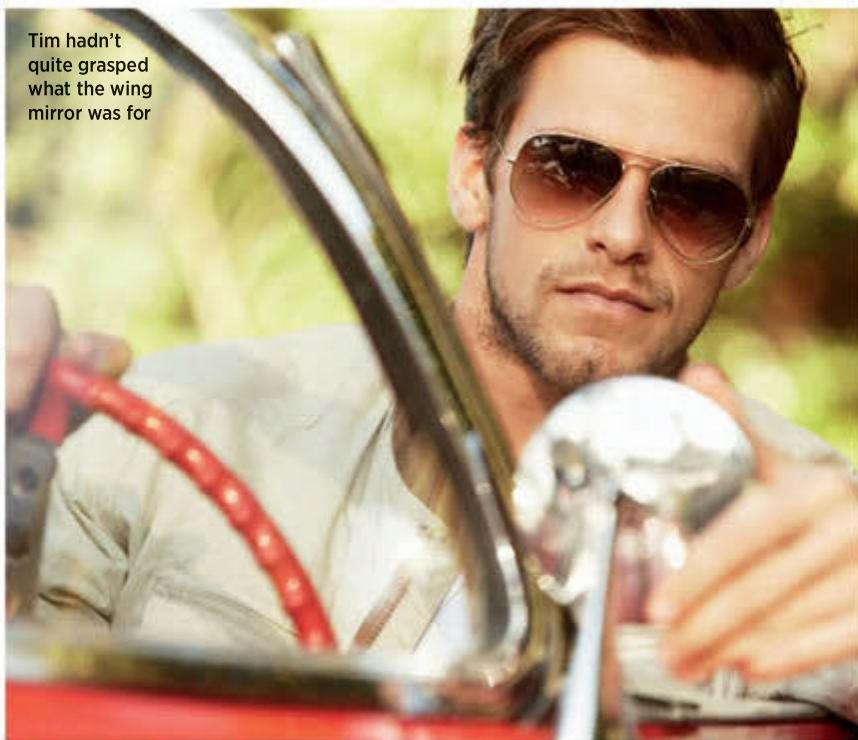
Charlie, 29, chef, Colchester

It's the thought that counts...

Last year I went along to a friend's birthday dinner with her family. After we'd had a meal, her great-aunt handed my pal a large bag of presents to open in front of everybody. Along with a set of bath goodies was a slightly more unusual gift... a chlamydia-testing kit! My friend looked mortified, but her elderly relative just laughed and said, "Well, you *are* at university now, and I know how young people can be!" I'm so glad my family stick to vouchers.

Belle, 26, student, Brighton

MEN CONFESS



TRAVEL TRAUMA

Getting from A to B isn't always easy

GET YER LOCKS OFF

As we were about to head home, exhausted, from a music festival in Belgium, my mate announced he'd lost his car keys. It was such an old car, it turned out he'd need replacement locks that would take a week to arrive from England. We had to leave the car in a field and travel back by train. Luckily a Belgian friend was able to drive the car back two weeks later. Guess who's no longer trusted with the keys...

Robbie, 21, student, Glos

TICKET TO HIDE

I bought a coach ticket online and saved a screenshot to my phone so I could show the driver. On the day of my journey, I was late and got

to the coach station in a panic. Instead of showing the driver a picture of my ticket, I accidentally flashed him a semi-naked photo of myself I'd taken to send a girl I was dating. Luckily he thought it was hilarious. My date never replied to my selfie though...

Dan, 22, IT consultant, Ipswich

PLANE SILLY

When a mate and I went to Berlin, I booked the flights. After a week of partying, we arrived at the airport totally shattered, only to be told our flight didn't leave for another month. Yes, I'd got the dates wrong. We had to shell out for new flights the next day and sleep on the freezing

airport floor. Now I always triple-check booking details.

Raj, 31, paramedic, Reading

WELL BROUGHT UP

I regularly used to drive from Essex to visit my girlfriend in Chester. One Friday I set out as usual, with my mate along for the ride, but soon began to feel queasy. I assumed it was due to the antibiotics I'd started taking. Suddenly I felt a rumbling in my stomach and I was sick everywhere. We tried to clean it up with wet wipes, but I arrived at my girlfriend's still in a total mess, complete with chunks of vomit in my hair. Not the best entrance...

Freddie, 24, musician, Essex



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PHOTOGRAPHS ANTONIO PETRONZIO. HAIR AND MAKEUP VICTORIA BARNES. STYLING JARED GREEN

Lauren Franklin tries to keep her 'Tindergotchi' alive...

Did you have a Tamagotchi? If you were a child of the '90s, of course you did. Those pre-internet digital pets nestled in your pocket, demanding to be fed regularly. And if you're anything like me, you'd have looked after it obsessively for all of 10 days, until suddenly caring for an egg-shaped keyring became just too much, and your pixellated chick was left to starve in a pile of its own crap.

You might imagine this idea has been consigned to the past. Well, I'm relatively new to single life – and even newer to Tinder – but my friends and I have realised the dating app shares startling similarities with the Tamagotchi. We've even christened it (*drumroll*) Tindergotchi.

After just a few days on Tinder I found myself getting anxious. I had loads of matches, so when my job required me to, I dunno, *work*, I couldn't keep up with them. They *all* demanded 24/7 attention and banter (and yes, I hate that word too). So when Jake or Rob had to wait, say, a whole hour for my reply, the embers of our cyber romance

I should have admired his creativity. But instead I thought, "Ugh, bore off"

had usually sputtered out. Basically, my Tindergotchi had gone to cyber heaven. I'd lament this harsh treatment (ignoring the fact that I'd dished out the same to Matt and Tom when *they* took too long too) but kept 'playing' anyway, trapped in this guilty cycle of trying to remember who I needed to reply to next. I felt like a full-time bloody babysitter.

Then something happened. One of my 'relationships' suggested we ask each other one random question each night, and if we liked the replies on Friday, we'd swap numbers and arrange a date. I should've admired his creativity and thought it was a novel way of getting to know someone – after all, I love talking rubbish with men. But instead I thought, 'Ugh, bore off. I can't be bothered to make *that* much effort.' In fact, I was kind of irritated by his genuine desire to learn about me. Total bitch, right?

It was a clear-cut case of Tindergotchi fatigue. I was bored with being glued to my phone; sick of being a slave to my matches. Surely dating shouldn't be *this* much effort? If I was having to *remember* to message all of these guys back, didn't it mean I just wasn't that into them?

So I did something extreme: I went cold turkey. I assessed my Tindergotchi gaggle to work out who I'd really want to go on a date with and who I was merely engaging in 'banter.' When only *two* survived this process, I told them I was deleting Tinder and, if they wanted to continue chatting, then to WhatsApp me. I let the others fall by the wayside.

The result? I wasn't that fussed, actually. I didn't feel any pangs, or worry I was 'missing out.' I felt kind of liberated – like my time was my own again, instead of my phone's. Having a mobile that didn't constantly need charging so I could talk to strangers was a bonus too.

I'd love to say my epiphany ended there, but that would be a lie. Because sadly, I soon realised the two guys I was Whatsapping were mega-dull. So I drunk-downloaded Tinder again the other night.

What can I say? My Tindergotchi needs me.

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SEX THE SINGLE GUY



PHOTOGRAPH ANTONIO PETRONZIO. GROOMING VICTORIA BARNES. STYLING JARED GREEN

Follow Tom @TomCraine or Tomcraine.com

Had an inexplicably bad date? **Tom Craine's** about to tell you why...

We've all had crap dates. I mean, let's face it, if you've read this column before you'll know my dating life is a cavalcade of tumbling ineptitude. But have you ever had one of those nights where the guy just didn't seem that keen and you couldn't work out why? Well, it probably wasn't your fault. Sometimes, 'It's not you, it's me' is more than just a weak excuse.

Not long after I started doing stand-up comedy, I was set up on a blind date. At the time I was enjoying single life and, to be honest, I really wasn't that fussed. My focus was my career and I was spending four or five nights a week on the road, often not getting home till the early hours of the morning.

Now, 'a life on the road' might sound exciting, conjuring up images of American hobos freight-hopping or golden sunsets enjoyed from an open-topped Chevy. But for a new comedian, the reality is less glamorous. It's more a story of Nissan Micras

I had one drink, then made crap small talk before making my excuses and heading home'

breaking down on the M4 and Ginsters pasties at Leigh Delamere Services.

This particular month had been hard going. After performing for 13 nights in a row, I found myself on a train to Bristol for gig number 14: the lunchtime opening of a new pizza restaurant. From the start, it was a disaster. Not only had the venue forgotten to buy a microphone, the establishment was arranged across 12 rooms, meaning I was forced to wander between them all, interrupting diners with rambling anecdotes from my life.

Three *painfully* undignified hours later, I collected my money, jumped on a Megabus and was back in London by early evening. Ideally at this point, I would've dragged my sad, exhausted self home and onto the sofa for a box set and chow mein – but frustratingly, this was the night of my date. It was too late to cancel, plus I felt the usual pressure to get out there (if you say no to being set up, you never hear the end of how you're going to die alone, surrounded by booze). And so I arrived at the bar, where I found my date looking lovely, having clearly made an effort, while I resembled a man who... well, who'd got changed on a Megabus.

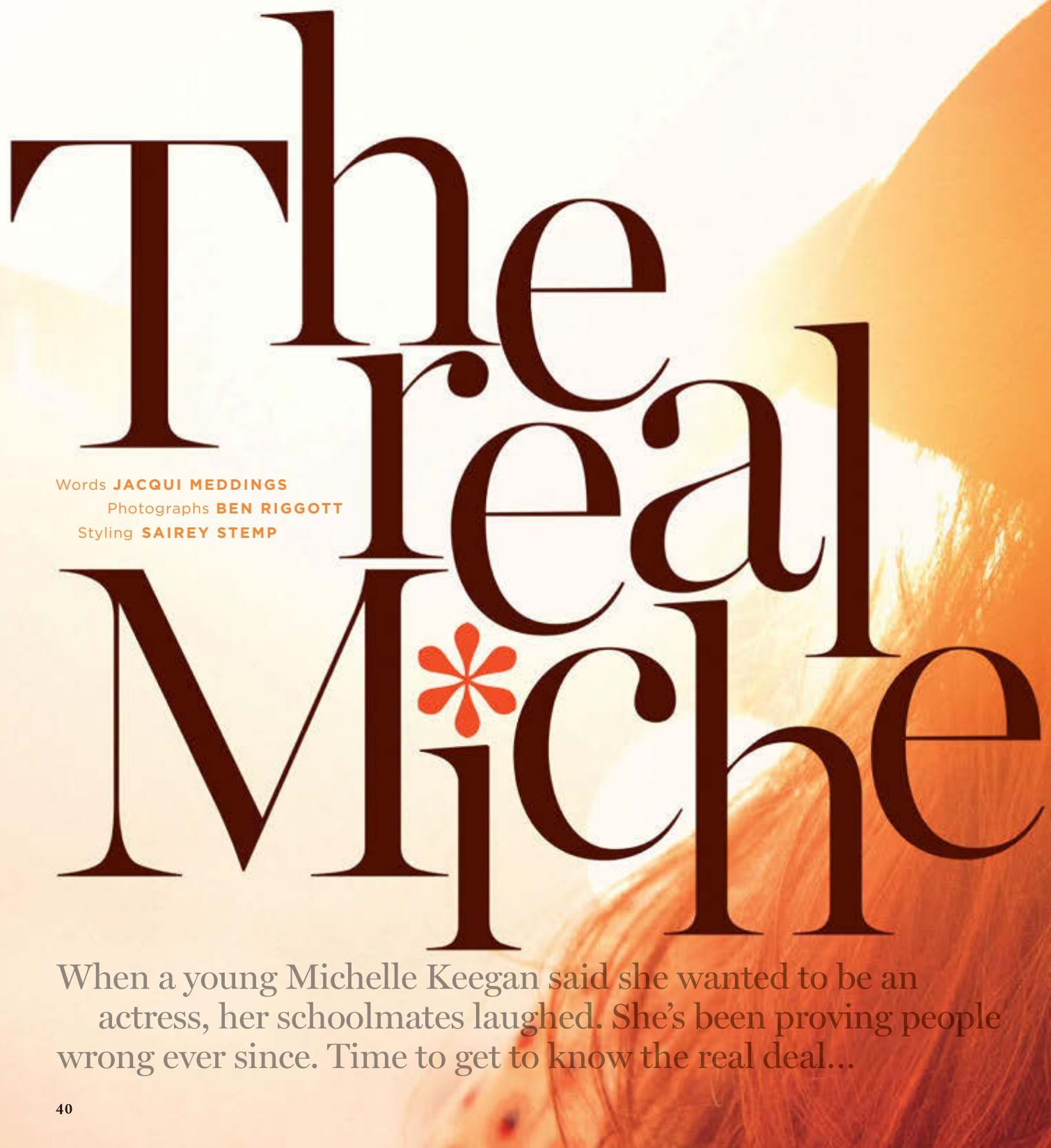
Drained and unenthusiastic, I had one drink, then made crap small talk before making my excuses and heading home. I felt bad for being rude, but I just wasn't feeling it. And by 'it', I mean leaving my sofa at all.

I still feel guilty about dragging her out on a date that was doomed to failure, but it made me realise something: if you're not in the right place, no matter how great your companion is, it's just a bad idea. Sometimes you need to admit you're not in the mood for love. So if you've been on the receiving end of such a car-crash date, don't beat yourself up. Perhaps he was worried about money, his career or hung up on his ex – or had just failed to make 60 diners in a Bristol pizzeria laugh. A pizzeria that, I'm happy to report, has since closed. Yay!



Woman we love

The real Michelle



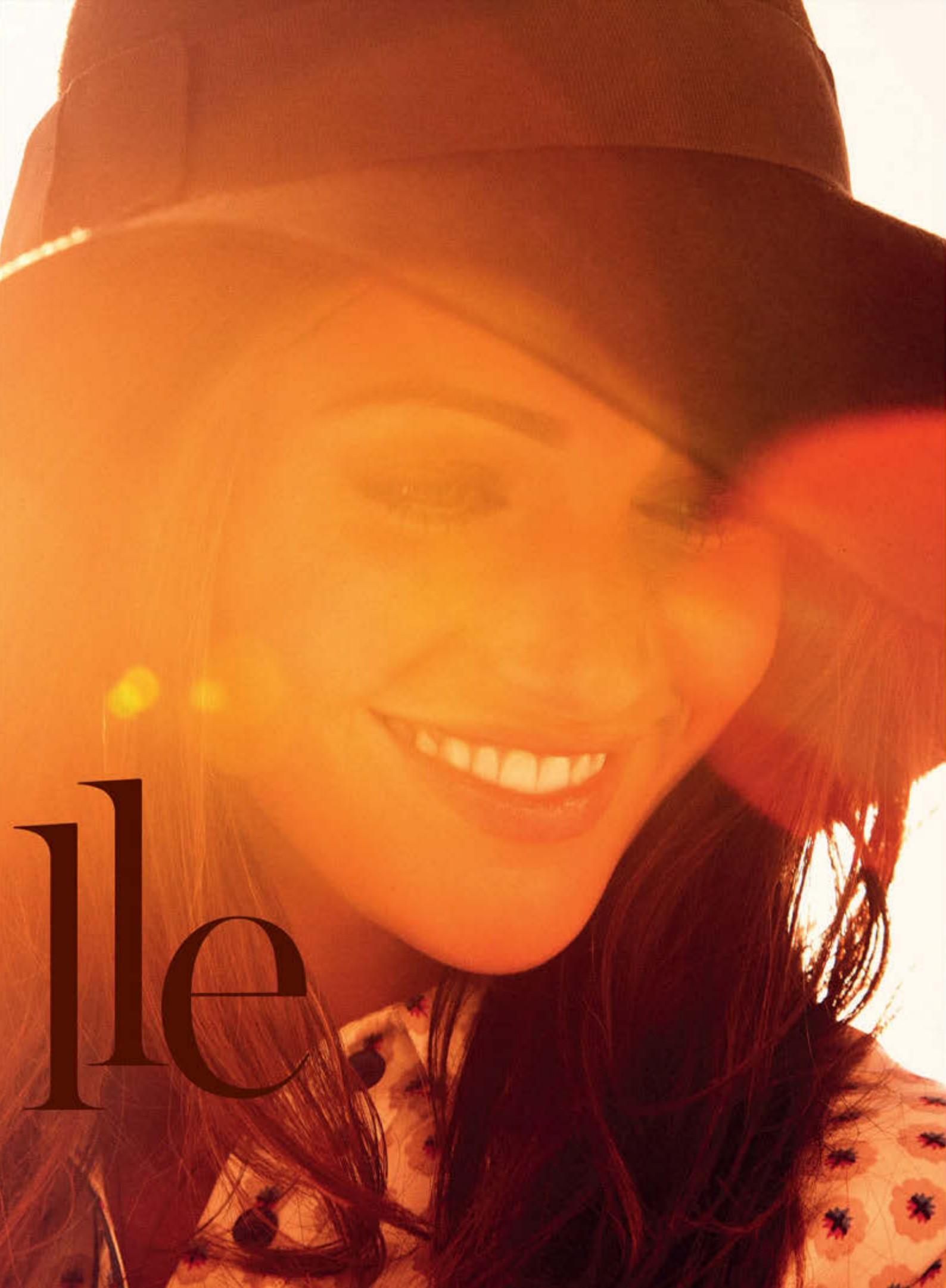
Words JACQUI MEDDINGS

Photographs BEN RIGGOTT

Styling SAIREY STEMP

When a young Michelle Keegan said she wanted to be an actress, her schoolmates laughed. She's been proving people wrong ever since. Time to get to know the real deal...

le





'I had normal jobs at first. I once sold makeup to Kym Marsh in Selfridges and I couldn't get over it'



"The latest thing people are saying about me is that I've had fillers in my cheeks," Michelle Keegan tells *Cosmo* with a 0%-bothered smile. (For the record, she hasn't.) Everyone seems to have an opinion on the 27-year-old's appearance since she strutted onto our TV screens as teen rebel Tina McIntyre in *Coronation Street* seven years ago.

Whenever pictures of her are posted online a debate starts in the comments box about whether her boobs/tan/teeth are fake. Not that she lets it get to her. Michelle has never been one to entertain haters with so much as a snotty tweet – even when there's gossip about her personal life, such as the rumours of bad blood between her and ex-fiancé Max George from The Wanted. "Sometimes it's hard – especially when people talk about your relationship," she says. "I could have easily told my side of the story. But if I speak up it'll carry on and there's more to life than that. I know when not to talk."

In fact, ask anyone who knows her and they'll say there's nothing fake about her. "Michelle has a truth to her, and that leaps off the screen in every scene," BAFTA-winning co-writer of *Shameless* Danny Brocklehurst told us when we asked him about working with her on new drama *Ordinary Lies*. Having left *Corrie* last year after 861 episodes, she has returned in Danny's gritty series about the consequences of the everyday lies people tell. And she's good. Michelle plays Tracy, a car-showroom receptionist who gets in trouble trying to pursue the glamorous things in life she craves. "She is so open to pushing herself as an actress and making sure her performance is always real," Danny says.

In real life, Michelle doesn't need to chase much. Last year she moved into a new house with her fiancé, ex-TOWIE boy Mark Wright. In a matter of weeks they'll be married – though the date and venue are top-secret. She's happiest at home with Mark and her dogs Pip and Phoebe, or working on her sell-out Lipsy range (a new collection drops this month). She loves visiting her family in Stockport, where she is patron of the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital Charity. It's clear this is a role she takes to heart, mentioning many of the seriously ill kids there by name. Yes, there's much more to Michelle than meets the eye...

Welcome to *Cosmo*! How does it feel to be a cover girl?

"I've been around *Cosmo* all my life. The fact that I'm on the cover is honestly a dream come true; I'm so happy."

Did you always want to act?

"I remember my younger brother Andrew always wanted to be a teacher; he knew his path in life, whereas I wasn't sure what I wanted to do when I left school. I did dream of being an actress, but I used to look at actors and actresses on TV and think they must have started at a young age, so I never thought it would happen for me. I assumed it was out of my reach. In Year 7 I wrote down in my notebook, 'When I'm older I want to be an actress,' but when I stood up and said it in front of the class, everyone just laughed."

What did you do when you left school?

"I had a few normal jobs at first. I remember once selling makeup to Kym Marsh in Selfridges and I couldn't get over it. I also worked at Manchester Airport for a while, and one day I checked in Jack Shepherd [who plays David Platt in *Coronation Street*] for a flight; then I did an evening class at Manchester School of Acting, auditioned for *Corrie*, and soon after I was playing Jack's girlfriend! I feel so lucky, like I've always dreamt of this. If I could rewind my life to 10 years ago I would never have thought for

one minute that I'd be doing the job I'm doing – and working with *Cosmo*! HELLO?! I still pinch myself every day."

Were you confident growing up?

"I was a bit of a tomboy. My teeth were crooked and I wouldn't smile, even in my mum's wedding pictures when she got remarried – I had my mouth shut the whole day. It boosted my confidence so much when I had my braces taken off at 16. As soon as I had them off, I started doing my hair and putting on a little bit of mascara sometimes. I remember reading an interview with Boyzone where they were asked what they looked for in a woman, and one of them said something like, 'Blonde hair and nice teeth'; I was obsessed with them, so I was devastated because it was everything I wasn't [laughs]!"

How did you cope with your parents separating when you were younger?

"It didn't make things difficult. My dad has always been involved in my life. I'm very close to both my parents. I had a great childhood so I was really lucky. My brother and I always stayed together – whether we were at my mum's or dad's. We've always been inseparable."

How do you feel when people talk about your appearance?

"When I was first in the public eye people said things about me that I didn't agree with, or I'd get upset about a certain comment – whether it was about my appearance or about my job. But I'm established now and I'm happy. I'm in a great relationship; I've got great friends; I've got a great family around me, so, the outside? I never let it affect me in that way."

Your boobs – are they natural?

"Yes [laughs]. My mum, the girls in my family, we've all got big boobs – it's in our genes. But I take it as a compliment; if people think they're fake, well that's fine. It's immaterial. It's like when people say I've got veneers on my teeth – look, you can tell they're real! I had braces for six years and I still wear Invisalign at night."

How did you and Mark first get together?

"About a year and a half before we started dating, we met backstage at *The X Factor* studios. At one point I left the room and when I came back he was chatting away to my mum about my >

FIND SOMETHING
TIMELESS

1943

1953

1978

1992

1969

1974

1976

1931

BLAKE LIVELY MICHEL HUISMAN

THE AGE OF ADALINE

KATHY BAKER WITH HARRISON FORD

AND ELLEN BURSTYN

1973

1964

CINEMAS MAY 8

brother. She said afterwards that Mark is a lovely man. The fact that he made the effort with my mum meant a lot. That's when I first started speaking to him. We were friends for a long time before we actually got together."

Did you have any preconceptions about him before you met?

"Obviously I'd watched a bit of *TOWIE* so I knew who he was and naturally you have your own presumptions. I remember my mates saying, 'He's a bit of a Jack The Lad!' But then I watched him on *I'm A Celebrity* and I could see that there was more to him. I never thought we'd end up together, though. I didn't want to jump into anything new; I just wanted to have a bit of me time at that point. [She'd just split with Max George.] So I never, ever planned on being in a relationship, it just happened naturally."

You were engaged before; why is it different this time with Mark?

"I've never had this 100% level of respect before – I've always been competing with the other person in some way. Whereas with Mark there's equality in the relationship. It's proper grown-up love and that's why we just work. We respect each other and we really love each other."

What have you learnt about finding, and keeping, real love?

"[In my first relationships] I was a typical young girl – I wanted attention and there was jealousy. I think that's what you learn from those relationships though, that sometimes if you're behaving like that, you eventually push people away."

How are the wedding plans coming along?

"I'm so excited but I'm too laid-back to be a real bridezilla. My mum has been helping me out lots, bless her. I've just enjoyed the whole planning process. I'm not very good at being organised, but with the wedding I've been pretty good. When it's all over I think I'll be really sad. It's such an exciting time!"

• *Ordinary Lies* is on BBC1, Tuesdays at 9PM.



Michelle with hubby-to-be Mark

Michelle made-up

Her four top fashion and beauty secrets

1 "I go for natural makeup during the day so I look different at night – possibly because I'm a bit lazy in the mornings too! I use Origins and Garnier products; they keep my skin looking fresh."

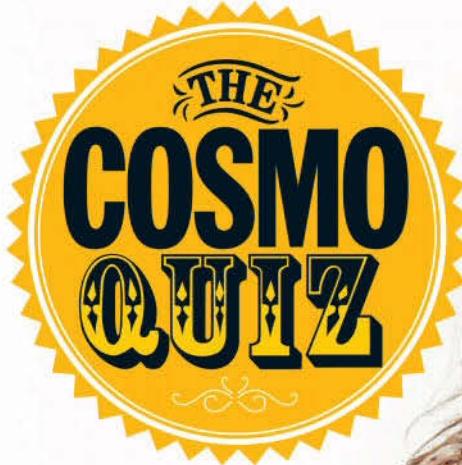
2 "I like Charlotte Tilbury Wonderglow [primer] and bronzer for a night out, plus lots of eyelash volume to look really glam. I don't wear bold lipstick because it's just

not me. I prefer to be bronzed and sun-kissed."

3 "I've always worn Lipsy, so when they asked me to work with them I jumped at the chance. People think you just put your name to it, but I'm fully involved; I'm not going to design something I wouldn't wear myself. I don't like anything low-cut or short."

4 "I always take my makeup off before bed, even if I've been out late. I love Kiehl's Midnight Recovery Concentrate." ▶

Woman we love



Name: Michelle Keegan

Nickname: Keegs

The emoji I can't text without

is... Blowing Kiss

My mum always taught me:

to respect others,
and good manners.

Mark has taught me to:

Stand up for
myself more...

The biggest misconception

about me is: I'm
confident in front
of the camera.

Sad films

... always make me cry

Mark

... always makes me cry
with laughter

I love waking up to:

No Alarm and
Sunshine

The woman who inspires

me most is:

My Grandma

The one item of clothing

I can't live without is:

A pair of good jeans

I think my best feature is:

Teeth, after 5 years
of having braces

... and I play it up by: Smiling
constantly



I feel sexiest in:

- a) Jeans and a tee
- b) Lingerie
- c) A bright-red dress
- d) Nothing
- Other

My underwear drawer is full of:

- a) Agent Provocateur, darling
- White, cotton and comfy
- c) Spanx all the way
- Cute matching sets

Mark's best feature is
his: **dimples**

If I was a boy for the
day, the first thing

I'd do is:
**Go on Marks
stag do
in Vegas... haha**

You might be shocked
to find out I have
never:

**... Bottom burped
in front of Mark...
(honestly 😊)**

Behind closed doors

Mark and I can be found:

Snogging each other's
faces off

Cooing over my dogs

Phoebe and Pip

Squabbling about: **the wedding plans**

Rehearsing his 'rumba'

Other

Draw a picture of yourself here:



THE FRAGRANCE FOR WOMEN



DAISY MARC JACOBS

MARCJACOBSPFRAGRANCES.COM

ONDRIA PHOTOGRAPHED BY JUERGEN TELLER

5

things you need to know about Max Irons

1 The 6ft 3ins actor – son of thesp Sinéad Cusack and Oscar-winner Jeremy – says, “I’ve got my dad’s height and smoking habit, but I think I’ve got my mum’s looks and sensibilities.”

2 He struggled reading scripts at the beginning of his career because of dyslexia, but now he’s flying. He played King Edward IV in BBC1’s *The White Queen*, appeared with Amanda Seyfried in *Red Riding Hood*, and you can see him with Ryan Reynolds and Helen Mirren in *Woman In Gold*, out 3 April.

3 Max went to a mixed boarding school, where he was frequently suspended for, he says, “nothing serious – only girls, booze, cigarettes.” He was kicked out just before his A-levels after a teacher caught him having sex.

4 But he’s a rebel with a social conscience – he once injured himself wrestling a shoplifter to the ground at his local corner shop. He claimed he decided to intervene to impress his girlfriend, later saying, “I’ve never done anything heroic before. I did it once and broke my wrist.”

5 He’s not tough 24/7 though: “I faint when I go to the dentist every single time. The chiropractor... I faint at that. If other people have injuries, I’m completely fine and available to help them, but if my own body gets injured, I just conk out.”





DAISY
MARC JACOBS
SORBET

NEW LIMITED EDITION FRAGRANCES

'MY NUDE PHOTOS WERE STOLEN AND I'M FIGHTING BACK'

Last summer, actress **Gabrielle Union** had her personal naked photos hacked, along with Jennifer Lawrence and other female stars. Here she passionately explains why no one deserves to have a private moment stolen

A day after I got married last summer, rumours spread on the internet that my name was on a list of more than 100 women whose private photos had been stolen from Apple's iCloud. I had been so happy that week, thinking about my wedding and honeymoon with my new husband, Miami Heat basketball player Dwyane Wade. But suddenly, I felt paralysed.

Nude photos of dozens of stars such as Jennifer Lawrence and Kate Upton had appeared on a website called 4chan.com,

where people can post anonymous comments and pictures. The site said more photos were to come, including mine. And so it began.

It felt like *The Hunger Games* – you're waiting to be attacked. Friends assure you it will pass and people will move on to the next thing. But in this case, that means the next victim – the next woman to have her naked body exposed to strangers against her will. And the crowd in the arena is going wild; critiquing and judging, cheering for more.

My honeymoon was plagued by thoughts of when I would get hit. It was

always in the back of my mind: will today be the day my life gets ruined? I thought about everyone the scandal would affect: my mom, who teaches classes about Catholicism to kids; the three boys I had become a stepmother to when I married Dwyane; my husband, who would always have to wonder who had seen intimate photos of me that only he was supposed to see.

The hit came three weeks later, on the final night of a beach retreat with Dwyane and the kids. We had just given the boys a big lecture on how to protect themselves online, telling them to be

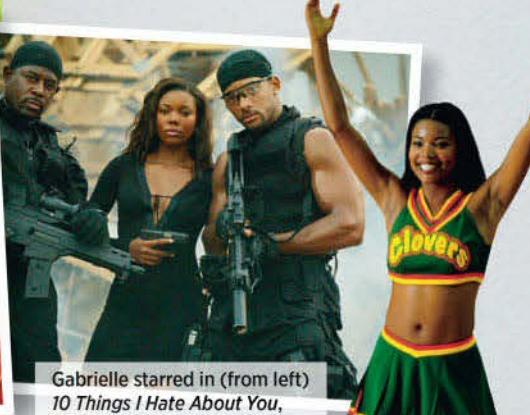
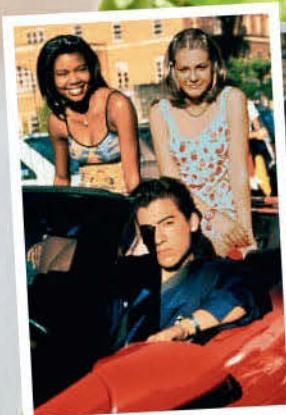


careful what they post. Friends contacted me to say a photo of me had surfaced online. I clicked on the link and felt a flicker of relief; the picture was not very revealing – my body was covered. It was a flirtatious shot I had sent to Dwyane three years ago, telling him to delete it right away, as he has a habit of losing phones. He deleted it and so did I.

I knew there'd be more. I wondered how a photo that was shot and deleted three years ago could be found. Sure enough, later that night, more pictures started popping up. All of them had been shot and deleted years ago. Yet there they were, online for the world to see. I felt extreme anxiety, a complete loss of control. I suddenly understood that deleting things means nothing. What is the point of including a delete function on a phone if it doesn't really delete? I had deleted them, but they remained on some server somewhere, unbeknownst to me, where hackers could find them.

I called my reps and lawyers, pleading, "Get the photos taken down." They said it takes time; the shots were spreading fast, to some 50 sites within the first few hours. Nude pictures of other celebrities were appearing, including Rihanna and a new round of Jennifer Lawrence shots. I thought, this is a targeted attack, a hate crime against women. Photos of my friend Meagan Good showed up as well, and that really hurt – she's like my little sister. We had become close while filming *Deliver Us From Eva*. I wanted to protect her; she was the target of a crime and did not deserve to be attacked.

I felt an urgent need to speak out, and my inner circle supported me. I started working on a statement that night. I've been a long-time advocate for women and girls, and a few years ago, President Obama appointed me to the US National Advisory Committee on Violence ›



Gabrielle starred in (from left) *10 Things I Hate About You*, *Bad Boys II* and *Bring It On*



Against Women. I didn't like the public perception of this scandal – that we were narcissistic, sexually deviant celebrities who got what we deserved. No one deserves to have a private moment stolen.

Some people say the publicity surrounding the photos helps our careers. We don't need this kind of press. Jennifer Lawrence is the face of two billion-dollar franchises. It's not a career boost – it's a new form of sexual abuse. Other people think they are entitled to know everything about us because we're in the public eye. No. If I show my husband my naked body, it doesn't mean

everyone gets to see it. People sometimes argue, 'But you wear skimpy bikinis – what's the difference?' The difference is you are the one who chooses to show your body. When billions of people on the internet can see you naked without your consent, it's a crime.

It was not the first time I had been violated. When I was a student, a stranger raped me one night when I was closing up at a summer job at a shoe store. People rallied around me with sympathy and support, but I didn't want to feel like a victim. I helped get the rapist prosecuted. I finished college. I started my career. And later, I spoke out about the attack, even though it made me feel physically ill to do so. It still does. But it's important. I was raised to speak up.

The first draft of my statement was pretty furious. I said, among other things, *'I can't help but be reminded that since the dawn of time, women and children, specifically women of colour, have been victimised, and the power over their own bodies taken from them'*. For black women targeted in this attack, there's an added dimension. Throughout history, our bodies have been open for public consumption, as in the days of slavery, when black women were taken to town



"I felt an urgent need to speak out"



squares to be paraded around naked and inspected for sale and sure abuse.

The next morning, I didn't want to leave my hotel room. I just wanted to hide. I had a wave of fear, thinking everyone had seen me naked. Then I thought, to hide is to act like a guilty person. I'd done nothing wrong. I went downstairs and braced myself for battle, expecting crude remarks and rude glances on our journey through Miami to LA.

'I just wanted to hide, but to hide is to act like a guilty person. I hadn't done anything wrong'

What I found surprised me. People in Miami airport said things like, "Stay strong, girl!" In LA, the photographers were waiting, but not to attack – they actually high-fived me. "We're on Team Gab," they said. They said the hacking was wrong. When the paparazzi tell you something is bad, you know it's really bad. Dwyane

and I also had to explain it to the boys, two of whom are in their teens. We told them the photos were private between the two of us, photos we'd deleted, and that criminals had found them anyway.

My lawyers sent cease-and-desist letters to sites running the photos. Every time they removed pics from one site, they popped up on another. It's an insane battle. I also started working with the authorities to try to find the culprits. We still don't know how more than 100

women were hacked. But I do know you should change your passwords often, make them complex and varied, and sign up for two-step verification on your accounts.

Apple said the celebrity accounts suffered a targeted attack on user names, passwords and security questions, and that iCloud wasn't to blame. I'm not so sure; I want to know more.

I also want to know: where are all the women's groups demanding justice? Any time you lose control over your body, it's a violation and a crime. And some of the stolen photos reportedly depict women when they were underage – that's child pornography. I hope people think about all these things when they consider clicking on the images.

I am adjusting to my new reality. Everything feels tainted. On Instagram, people tell me they've seen me naked. Walking into my favourite pizza place, I wonder who has seen the photos. Some people have told me, "On the bright side, you look amazing in the photos." I know they mean well, but this is a criminal act, a gross violation. It reminds me of the time someone asked me if my rapist was 'cute'. That kind of misguided thinking undermines the severity of the crime and the horror of the experience.

Here's the way I choose to look at it: bad things happen to people every day. It's what we do with them that counts. If someone betrays your trust, you might feel like you're alone. You're not. Talk to people who care for you. You might feel like nothing will ever be the same. And that's true – nothing *will* be the same. Take that and change things.

• *Gabrielle's latest film, Top Five, is out now. She's a global brand ambassador for Neutrogena, for whom she has travelled the world promoting wellness and education for women and girls.* ♦

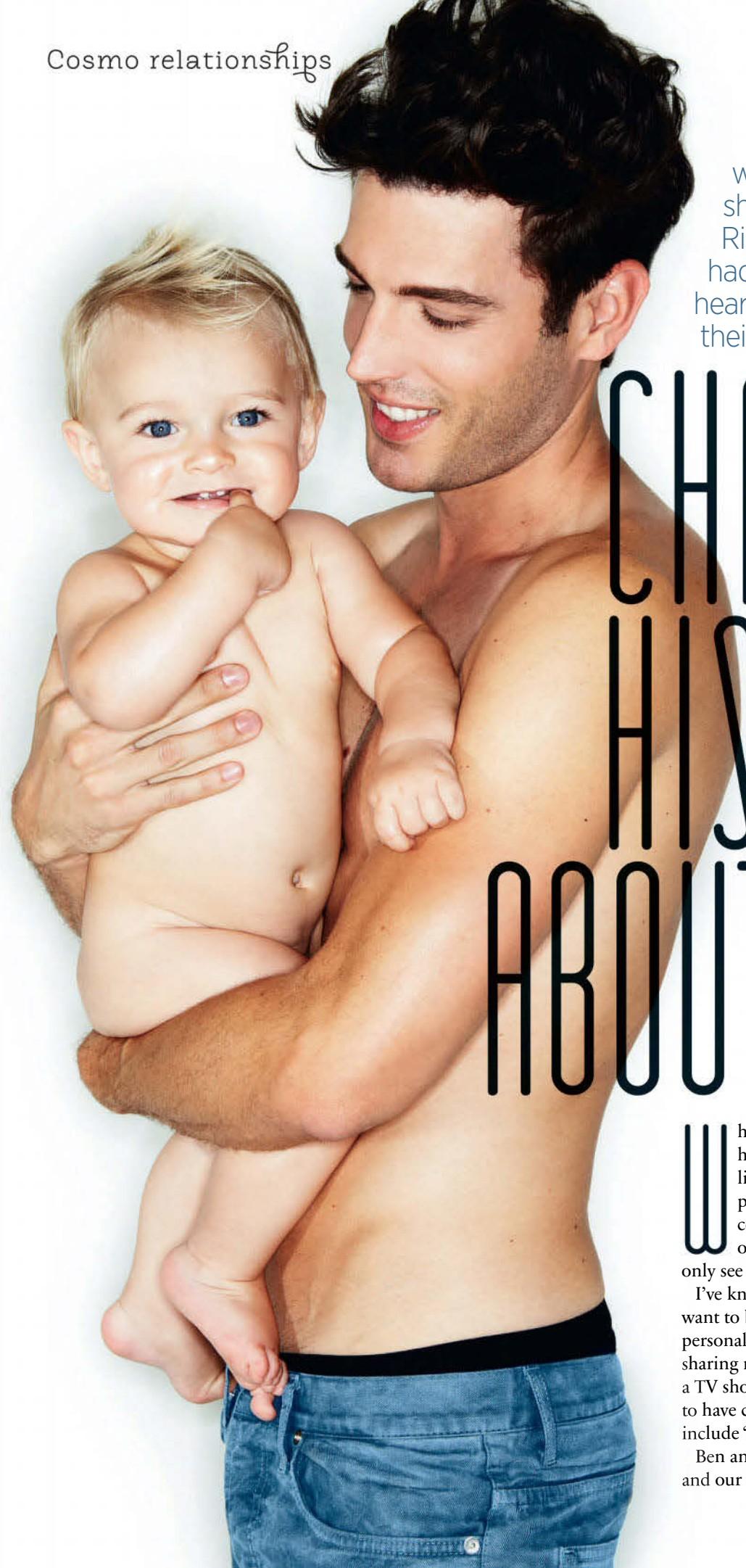


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Lilit Marcus
was confident
she'd found Mr
Right – until he
had a change of
heart that rocked
their relationship

'HE CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT KIDS'

When I met Ben*, I knew immediately he was The One. We'd both studied literature and loved to travel. And perhaps it was because I felt so comfortable with him that I told him on just our second date that we could only see each other if he didn't want kids.

I've known since I was a teen that I never want to be a mother. While this was an intensely personal decision, I've been quite open about sharing my story. In fact, ever since I was part of a TV show segment about women not wanting to have children, Google's autofill suggestions include 'child-free' and, 'I don't want kids.'

Ben and I were on the same page about babies and our relationship. We loved our city life and

envisioned a future full of spoiling our cat (less expensive than spoiling a kid and no saving for uni fees!), travelling the world and being the cool aunt and uncle to Ben's siblings' children.

We moved in together and started to talk about getting married. But after we'd been together for nearly two years, Ben dropped a massive bombshell. He'd changed his mind. Now that his friends were

starting to get married and have kids, he'd softened to the idea of becoming a dad himself someday. I'd been told since I was 15 that I'd change my mind about becoming a mother when I met the right guy. Instead, I'd met the right guy and the right guy had changed *his* mind.

I used to feel as though I was the only woman who didn't want to have kids, but I quickly learnt this wasn't the case when dozens of like-minded women contacted me after seeing me on TV. Celebrities such as Ellen DeGeneres and Oprah Winfrey have all talked openly about choosing not to have children. George Clooney has also publicly stated that he isn't interested in being a father – but he gets less judgement, because he's a man.

Even as a child, when I imagined what kind of life I wanted to have, I pictured myself as an aunt or a godmother, the cool, older role model and friend who could help with the problems you were afraid to go to your parents about. When I think about the women in my life, I think about my grandmother, but I also think about her best friend – a child-free woman who spent her afternoons taking my sister and me on picnics.

I'm part of a growing group. A study showed one in five women of child-bearing age in the UK can be expected not to have children. And with seven billion people on the planet, I feel OK about that.

For two weeks after Ben's confession, I spent every day weighing up the



'I'd be having a child to keep a man, not because I wanted to be a parent'

possibilities. Maybe he could be the stay-at-home dad and do the bulk of the childcare? Maybe we could adopt or be foster parents so I didn't have to be pregnant or give birth? But no matter how much twisting I did, one clear answer remained: I didn't want to.

I'd found the right guy, it was the right time, we had enough money and a support network. It was the best possible set of circumstances for bringing a baby into the world, but I still didn't want a child. I couldn't convince myself otherwise.

Leaving Ben was the hardest thing I've ever done, but I know what would have been even harder: bringing a life into this world knowing I was having a child to keep a man, not because I wanted to be a parent.

I've been called a lot of things over the years: selfish, lazy, bitter and a bad woman. I've been told I'll die alone and unloved.

Ben, to his credit, never said any of these things. Instead, after we split up, as I was hauling boxes out of the apartment we'd shared, he used another word – brave. People assume I had a messed-up childhood, or that I've chosen my career. But neither is true.

Sometimes it's hard to explain exactly why I don't want kids – it's like asking me why I have brown eyes or why I'm right-handed. I was born this way. And I believe there's a man out there who's also born this way, whom I'll find and who's the partner I'm looking for. ♦

Child-free celebs **SPEAK OUT**



"Having children changes your life drastically, and I really love my life."

CAMERON DIAZ



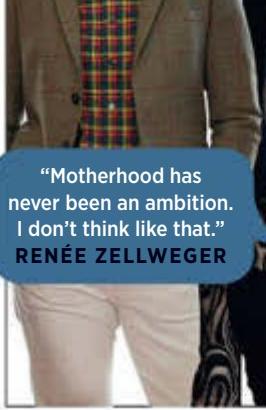
"We got a puppy, and that's my idea of starting a family. People say, 'Oh that's a practise for parenting,' but if it's practise for anything, it's to be a mum to another puppy. We are not really interested in having children."

CHRISTINA HENDRICKS



"They're precious to look at and I love them. We have nieces and I love them very much. [But I] don't want 'em."

ELLEN DEGENERES



"Motherhood has never been an ambition. I don't think like that."

RENÉE ZELLWEGER

TAKE ONE S CHANGE YO

YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT - AND 7 MAY IS YOUR CHANCE TO PROVE IT

If someone mentions the word 'election' and your first thought is, 'enough already!', you're not alone. But bear with us. This is expected to be the most closely fought vote in decades, so we spoke to hundreds of you up and down the country to discover the five issues that are most important to YOU. Then we asked these women - ones with real personal experience on each topic - to meet and grill the five key parties on your behalf. Here's what they discovered...



Kimberley Carter
works for housing charity Shelter, while struggling to pay her own rent. Her landlord has just increased it by £100 a month.

Amber Cowburn's
brother Ben took his own life aged just 18. Through her charity The Invictus Trust, she is fighting to stop more young people going without the vital mental-health services they need.

ECOND TO UR FUTURE



TV presenter **Charlie Webster** is a survivor of sexual abuse. She's a Women's Aid ambassador and hit headlines when she spoke out against convicted rapist, footballer Ched Evans.

Mum of two **Jade Brady** suffered domestic abuse at the hands of her ex-partner. She doesn't want her children to grow up in a world where they're afraid.

Louise Court has been Cosmo's Editor-in-Chief for eight years and has spoken to hundreds of you about the problems you face climbing the career ladder. ▶

THE POLITICIANS



CONSERVATIVE

Nicky Morgan, Education Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities



LABOUR

Ed Miliband, Labour leader



LIB DEM

Nick Clegg, Lib Dem leader and Deputy Prime Minister



GREEN

Natalie Bennett, Green Party leader



UKIP

Suzanne Evans, deputy chair



WE WANT AFFORDABLE HOMES

Kimberley says: "I've seen the effects the chronic shortage of affordable homes has had. After decades of talk, I want to know which parties will finally make this issue a priority."

"The next Conservative government would continue to prioritise house building. There's been a huge drive to look at where land can be released, and we aim to support small developers. And while we don't want to see people pulling out of the market, we've also taken action on landlords, letting agents and fees."

"Of all the issues facing young people, housing is top of the list, and we plan to build 200,000 homes a year. Developers can't just sit on land waiting for it to accumulate in value, and when planning permission is granted, local people should get first access. Many young people are renting and getting a shockingly bad deal, and we plan to change that too, with three-year tenancies, predictable rent rises, and stopping letting agents charging tenants fees."

"We just don't build enough homes. One part of the solution is to free up the planning system. Next, you need a healthy economy. [Chancellor] George Osborne says once you balance the books, you shouldn't borrow money to invest in things such as housing. I fundamentally disagree. We should borrow sensibly, then invest in housing, energy, roads, rail and renewable energy – the things we need to rewire our economy."

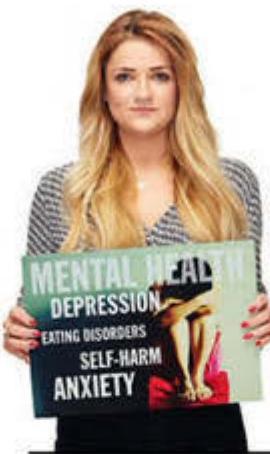
"We need to start with the principle that we treat houses as homes, not financial assets. And we've got a whole range of policies to address that. We want to build 500,000 affordable, social rental homes. We want to end right-to-buy so we're not handing public assets into private hands; to bring in security of tenure for private tenants, and we want rent caps too."

"We want to introduce medium-hold tenancies of anything from three to six years. We'll also make sure landlords can only evict people in extreme circumstances – it's been far too easy for them to make up excuses to evict people. And we plan to put a million affordable homes on brownfield sites [land previously used for industry] by 2025, which will really help tackle the housing crisis."

KIMBERLEY'S VERDICT

"I'd like to hear more from Natalie on how the Greens would build the volume of homes we need, and I'm not yet convinced by what UKIP had to say on the subject, either. The Lib Dems and Labour clearly see housing as an important issue – but I'd like to see how serious both parties are about making their plans a reality. Nicky was keen to point out that the Conservatives have built houses, but we're still building less than half the homes we need."





TACKLE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Amber says: "I've seen first-hand the importance of issues such as breaking the stigma around mental-health problems, and chronic underfunding. By meeting the parties, I hope to make sure these are firmly at the top of their agendas."

"The mandate for NHS England mentions mental health a lot. As well as parity between mental and physical health, we need data about waiting times and treatments to help people know what they should be expecting, so if they don't get it they can complain."

"First, we need to raise awareness of the issue. We also want to give more priority to this in the overall NHS budget – I've had contact with people with mental-health issues who say if they'd had help earlier, it would've saved heartache and resources."

"One of my proudest moments in this government was announcing new waiting-time standards for mental health. If someone has an episode of psychosis, they'll now be seen within two weeks; 75% of all sufferers will be seen within six weeks, but I'd love to reduce that."

"We want physical and mental health to be treated on an equal footing, but there's a broader issue here. Mental-health problems are escalating among young people due to stress, poverty and fear about the future – so we need to address these pressures too."

"We've pledged to put an extra £3bn a year into the NHS from money we'd save from leaving the EU, and we want to stop the postcode lottery of mental-health treatment. We also want to explore initiatives that have better outcomes for addiction."

AMBER'S VERDICT

"Natalie's responses seemed heartfelt but vague, while Nick gave clear, informed answers. Suzanne appeared to think money's all it takes to improve mental health. I found Nicky at best ill-equipped and ill-prepared to talk about mental health. I was impressed by Ed – he sees mental-health care as a worthwhile investment for the country."



PROTECT WOMEN FROM VIOLENCE

Jade says: "As a survivor and campaigner with Women's Aid, I want to know that the parties are committed to preventing domestic violence."

"Anybody killed or abused is one person – one woman, usually – too many. So we've ring-fenced £40m for services such as rape crisis and sexual-assault referral centres, as well as announcing an additional £10m for shelters."

"This type of crime requires a particular degree of sensitivity and understanding to deal with it. We all know the issues around victims and witnesses coming forward, so proper training for the police is at the heart of what we're proposing."

"[As well as] changes to the law, you need to make domestic abuse uncompromisingly unacceptable; to encourage a culture shift. The countries that have done the best at stopping or reducing it are those where it's seen as an abhorrent part of society."

"As a feminist, this is an issue close to my heart. We need a national strategy to deal with domestic abuse, including specialist services and training for those likely to encounter victims, which will enable them to refer those people to specialist services."

"A huge amount of funding has been taken away from women's refuges, which is wrong. Women in abusive relationships often find themselves powerless – and let's not forget it's about mental abuse as well – so I'd like to see that funding restored."

JADE'S VERDICT

"It sounded like changes are on the Green agenda, but I'm not sure if they're a real priority. Nick was passionate, but unrealistic. I found Suzanne patronising in the interview, and her answers lacked substance, and I didn't think any of Nicky's answers were conclusive. Of all the parties, Ed's answers were the 'best'."



RESPECT FOR WOMEN

Charlie says: "Education is the best way to help prevent domestic and sexual violence – perhaps if I'd had more information when I was younger, I wouldn't have gone through what I did. I want to make sure educating young people about respect and identity is high on the parties' agendas."

"We don't want to make PSHE [personal, social, health and economics education] statutory because it ends up as a tick-box attitude. I'd much rather schools had really good teaching materials and decided, 'This is what our children need at this age in this part of the country.' Schools should be informing young people on unhealthy relationships, online abuse, revenge porn, and even things such as financial management."



"Not a month goes by without the *Daily Mail* claiming five-year-olds are going to be taught to use condoms – it's just bonkers. Age-appropriate sex education can be done well, and is best done without scaremongering. Why can't you talk to 10-year-olds about relationships? Conversations about how boys treat girls and how people treat each other shouldn't only start at secondary school."



"We may have changed the law to give women equality, but we've got a terrible problem with 'everyday sexism'. We'd make PSHE statutory. I think it's right to have sex and relationship education for primary and secondary schools; it's one of the best means of countering negative influences on kids. Education is about passing exams, but it's also about preparing young people for life – everything from mental health to the kind of society we live in."

"Sex and relationship education isn't keeping up with the realities of life. Issues of consent, revenge porn, helping people understand how relationships should work... it's critically important we give young people the tools to understand how they can have relationships that are healthy all round. They need information, support, knowledge and background so they can make good decisions."



"We don't intend to make PSHE a statutory part of the curriculum. It's got to a point where if you approached somebody in the street and asked about some of the issues they're covering in the classroom, you'd probably be arrested. Sex education should start at 11."



CHARLIE'S VERDICT

"I think UKIP's policies could set back the hard work that's been done so far – and I was disappointed Nigel Farage and David Cameron couldn't meet us. I didn't think Nick gave the topic the importance it deserves, and Nicky voted against gay marriage, so I wasn't surprised by her 'conservative' stance. Natalie was pro compulsory PSHE, but I felt Ed had the clearest understanding that it needs to be a priority."



CREATE MORE JOBS

Louise says: "It seems like it's getting harder and harder to get a foot on the career ladder. Many of you have gone to uni and then can't get the jobs you thought it would equip you for. I know how important job security is, and want to ask the parties how they're going to help women find fair, secure employment."

"We've established the Women's Business Council in the course of this parliament, helping them to set up businesses. For younger women it's about role models and mentoring, and making sure they're aware of the fantastic opportunities out there. We need 83,000 more engineers every year in this country for the next 10 years, and they can't all be men – so it's about changing perceptions."



"It's great that, despite all the furore, more young people are going to university than ever. But one of the most important things we need to do is overcome the residual snobbery that says academic qualifications are a good thing, and vocational qualifications aren't. One of the best routes to get youngsters into good-quality jobs is through vocational routes, and putting practical skills on the same footing as university degrees is essential."

"EU legislation is pretty much responsible for the rise in zero-hour contracts: we'd leave the EU and scrap the Temporary Agency Workers Directive that led to big companies trying to get around it. We'd also remove tuition fees for those taking subjects at university such as medicine and engineering."



"Yes, we need to create new jobs, but they must be good-quality jobs that enable people to make ends meet. Zero-hours contracts – not knowing from one week to the next what your hours or wages are going to be – are a huge problem too. I've looked at *Cosmo's* manifesto on this, and it looks exactly the same as ours. We need legislation to say if you work regular hours month after month, you get a regular contract."



"So many young people are trapped in low-paid jobs, so we're calling for a £10-an-hour minimum wage by 2020. We need to create jobs you can build a life on, with decent pay, a reasonable amount of security and certainty of what you're going to earn every week. We also want to introduce the Norwegian model of a 40% minimum quota for women on the boards of big companies."



LOUISE'S VERDICT

"I wasn't convinced by UKIP's apparent belief that leaving the EU will solve all our problems, while the Lib Dems' support of vocational qualifications won't help students facing huge debt. Nicky spoke more about working mothers, and girls making choices at school, than the plight of *Cosmo* readers. The Greens' minimum-wage pledge sounded promising in theory, as did some of the Labour strategies." ♦



***To see what you told us you wanted from this election in the *Cosmo* manifesto, video footage, and what UKIP said when we asked them about racism and sexism, go to Cosmopolitan.co.uk/cosmopolitics**

ARE YOU OVER OWNING STUFF?

Prioritising fun over possessions, and embracing change is the millennial way, says Katie Glass



I'm balanced at an unsteady Ikea desk in a rented flat, working on a Mac that's on its last legs. I've got a cheap satchel rather than an 'investment bag'. My furniture is flat-pack, my phone's on a rolling 18-month contract, and no one I know owns a DVD collection, let alone a flat.

While my mum can pull out shirts she wore in the '70s, there's nothing in my wardrobe that I was wearing last year. My clothes are as disposable as most of my life – but that's exactly how I designed it.

We're in a world obsessed with change. Nothing's permanent. Millennials (those of us born between 1980 and 2000) shift between rented places, frequently changing cities and jobs. The number of us aged 25-34 who own our own property has halved in the past decade; Primark's rise reflects our love of throwaway fashion; even an iTunes playlist feels unnecessarily committed when you can flick through the hits on Spotify instead.

We live in happy impermanence, more interested in experiences than

possessions. Some say we've become a throwaway culture, and that it's bad for the planet (landfill sites are struggling to deal with the rise in cheap, man-made textiles that can't be recycled). But surely being a generation that doesn't value material possessions – or judge people by them – is, on the whole, a *good* thing? To us, capital isn't about money in the bank, it's cultural – calculated not in £20 notes, but in how busy our social-media feeds are. Two-thirds of us feel more fulfilled by investing in experiences than by spending the equivalent money on objects; we'd much rather have a lost weekend in a field than splash out on a handbag. After all, you can only Instagram a picture of a Mulberry so many times.

And while we thrive on novelty (it looks more impressive on Facebook), the economy thrives on our versatility. Millennials in the UK spend almost £420million a month on live events. And whatever you want to do with no strings attached, there's an app for that. You can rent flats on Airbnb, wheels on Zipcar and everything from bikes to birthing pools at Rentmyitems.com.

I love how my generation embraces change. In the '90s, going with the flow

had a sense of apathy about it, now it's an active way of life. We live in flux – between jobs and cities and places we like to hang out. Just look at our obsession with pop-ups for proof.

It's even influencing our relationships. A recent *Time* magazine survey asked 18-34-year-olds to describe their ideal partnership. Less than a third chose a traditional marriage contract, while 43% wanted a union that could be formalised or dissolved after a two-year trial, and 21% opted for a 'presidential system' with vows lasting four years.

It's certainly an exciting time to be young. But what about the end game? Will we be a generation of 40-year-old teenagers, refusing to settle down or commit to growing up? If we won't do it, who's going to buy the houses, form committed relationships and have kids? Who'll run for Parliament? Train as doctors? Build cities?

Perhaps society's expectations of what 'normal' actually is will change along with us – seeing our chameleon-like capabilities as a positive thing, not a distraction. Our flexible way of living has made us tolerant and adaptable, which is something we should be very proud of. At least that's what I think right now; the best thing about change is that it's something you can always change your mind about...

'My clothes are as disposable as most of my life'

DO YOU AGREE WITH KATIE? LET US KNOW AT COSMO.MAIL@HEARST.CO.UK

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Why does he do that?

Struggling to understand the guy in your life? We put your questions to fellow man **Ky Henderson**

Q My boyfriend is really into public displays of affection. I'm not – our relationship is *ours* and I don't need to put it out there for everyone to see. When he kisses me in public and I pull away, he gets offended. How do I get him to tone down the shopping-centre smooches?

A By meeting him halfway. People have vastly different definitions of what constitutes too much PDA. Holding hands can be out of order for one person, while engaging in behaviour that can practically result in pregnancy is perfectly acceptable to another. You have to figure out where you draw the line. It sounds like you're relatively conservative when it comes to public affection, and there's nothing wrong with that. But there's also nothing wrong with your boyfriend occasionally wanting to kiss you in public (assuming it's not a tonguing

during a family funeral). Be specific about what you are and are not OK with, but don't just announce that you're not happy with *any* of it. The poor lad might feel rejected, since PDAs are clearly something he likes. Make sure he knows this is just *your* personal take on public affection and it doesn't mean he embarrasses you. You want to set boundaries, not close off the affection pipeline completely.



Q The guy I'm seeing is a model (result!), but he's always complaining about how little money he makes. He hardly ever treats me to dinner (takeaways included), but he just bought a £400 surfboard that he claims was 'an incredible deal'. Should I be pissed off?

A You shouldn't be annoyed that he bought the surfboard; it's his money, and assuming he's not in debt to you, he can spend it however he wants. But you can certainly be annoyed by the way he handles his finances relative to your relationship.

I'd guess the real problem here is that he's not making you feel cared for. There are countless inexpensive things he could do to show you he cares – from cooking dinner, to planning low-cost-but-fun dates, to simply supporting you emotionally, which is free. I'll bet that if he had been doing those things (and not always bitching about money), you wouldn't care about the surfboard.

Explain this to him, and mention new things you want to do together rather than listing what he's done wrong. If he doesn't catch on, I think you may need to find a man who's more in control of his life.



My boyfriend and I are binge-watching Game Of Thrones together. It's fun! But when I fall asleep during an episode, he moves on to the next one without me. I feel extremely betrayed. Is it just me, or is this TV adultery?

A To you, his watching the next episode is an insensitive betrayal. But to your boyfriend, it's just a TV show. So before you go all Joffrey on him, make it clear this is about being considerate and doing things as a couple. Explain to him that watching episodes without you is the TV equivalent of him orgasming then rolling over to go to sleep before you're finished. And speaking of sleeping, stop passing out on him when you've planned to watch a show together. It's equally inconsiderate!

Q I slept with a guy, and when he finished, he high-fived me and said, "Good job!" What the hell is that supposed to mean?!

A Have you never watched a sporting event? A high five is a reaction to something great happening. In this case, it means he had fun with you, he thought you were good in the sack and he thought the moment called for some light-heartedness. Nothing more.

Granted, joking around like that probably wasn't the smartest move considering he didn't know you all that well, but it sounds like his gesture came from a good place – he wanted to do something silly to alleviate any potential post-sex awkwardness. So give the guy a break, and be happy he didn't fist-bump you instead...

Q I made a bad joke in bed about wanting to have my boyfriend's baby. I thought he'd laugh, but I think it's freaked him out. How do I fix this?

A Note to selves: bed is *not* the ideal place to make jokes about unplanned pregnancy. Sure, some men would be totally able to roll with it, but apparently yours isn't one of them. Maybe it's because he's not mature enough. Maybe you haven't been dating long enough for him to understand you were joking. Or *maybe* he once had a one-night stand with a woman who said that and, terrifyingly, meant it.

Choose a time when you're not in bed together and say to him, 'Hey, I'm sorry if my joke about wanting to have your baby freaked you out, but trust me, it was 100% a joke. If you knock me up, I'll be annoyed.' Being open and honest – and light-hearted – should help to defuse the weirdness.

“Your boyfriend could clearly date a lot of people, but he chose to go out with you”



My boyfriend is hot and women chat him up all the time, even if I'm standing right next to him. It really bothers me, but when I bring it up, he says I'm just jealous. How do I deal with it?

A Assuming he doesn't flirt back, there's nothing either of you can really do about it. But here's something I learnt years ago when I was going out with an inhumanly attractive woman: if you want to date hot people, you need to be happy when they get chatted up.

It should remind you that your boyfriend is desirable, which is always nice. It also reinforces the fact that he could clearly date a lot of people, but he chooses to go out with you.

Therefore, when women hit on him, your first thought should be, 'I have a fit boyfriend who thinks I'm amazing!' And for crying out loud, have fun with it. If some girl is flirting with him, subtly put your hand on his crotch under the table. Or have a laugh good-naturedly cock-blocking her by putting your arm around him and whispering dirty talk in his ear. Bonus: your boyfriend will think you're even more amazing than he already does. ♦

MANTHOPOLOGY

Calum Best

The surprise CBB star, 34, shows us his best side

"The only wealth you have is your health. I grew up being active – playing football, boxing, snowboarding. Then when I was 24 my dad [George Best] died and I stopped all that and started drinking loads. I was skinny, but I had a beer gut and a double chin. I didn't look good or healthy. I was in a state. I was constantly seen to be stumbling around drunk, some seedy guy. Eventually

I came back around. I started eating well, and now I juice and go to the gym every day for an hour. I'm not trying to be a fitness model and my body is far from great but it's better than it's been before. On *Big Brother* I showed who I was – a laid-back, well-mannered, good guy. I'm so happy people see that now. I couldn't have asked for more."

Calum's book *Second Best: My Dad And Me*, (£16.99, Transworld) is out now

- **Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in twenty-something men, but is curable if found early. Research shows men are less likely to have health checks than women, so remind the men in your life to check their bits.**

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I'LL BE THERE FOR YOU...

Friends can be found in the most unlikely places. Here, six women share the extraordinary stories of how they met their rock



Helen & Caroline

'Cancer brought me my best friend'

Helen Venner, 34, a teacher from Whitstable, and Caroline Lee, 35, a charity worker from Croydon, met on a cancer support group on Facebook



HELEN SAYS Breast cancer is a lonely journey. When I was diagnosed in 2013, aged just 32, I was thrown into a scary world of chemotherapy and operations; I felt very alone. The other women I met in hospital were all older than me; there wasn't a young face to be seen. If Mum came with me for treatment, they assumed she was the one with cancer.

When I found out about a Facebook group especially for young women with cancer, it was the lifeline I needed. With my friends I was putting on a brave face, but on the group I could be much more honest about my feelings.

Almost immediately I felt a spark with Caroline – you make a different connection when you're bonding over something so difficult. We were in the same 'chemo buddies' group thread, and

she always seemed to know the right thing to say to people when they were stressed or scared.

For the first five months we were too ill to meet up, but we finally went for dinner. We had already connected so deeply, meeting her was a relief – the pressure cooker of being very ill had intensified our relationship.

We're both in remission now, but there are still a lot of side effects to our treatment; our journey isn't over. I've had a lumpectomy and I worry about my body image, so dating feels like a huge step. But we're both single and Caroline understands what I mean when I say even talking to a guy is scary. We make each other stronger. Recently, with her support, I've even had the courage to go on dates.

CAROLINE SAYS From Helen's first few posts online, I knew we were going to be close friends. When you have cancer and feel sick but can't sleep, the sense of panic can be really overwhelming – but whenever anyone on Facebook needed help, Helen was always there to offer encouragement.

She made me feel better about myself and lifted me up when I was low. Some of my oldest friends found it hard to cope with my diagnosis, but I could



Caroline (left) and Helen embracing life after chemo at a London festival



'She lifted me up when I felt low'

talk to Helen about anything. It was so natural when we finally met each other, like I'd known her all my life. She was sparky and funny, and we both love to party. Cancer has been a difficult experience, but it's given me the blessing of a best friend for life.

• For information and support, visit Breakthrough.org.uk or Facebook.com/youngerbreastcancernetwork.

'These days we laugh until our tummies hurt'

Amy Tyreman, 31, a teacher, and Kerry Bamford, 27, a business support officer, are both from Rochdale. Their friendship developed after they both lost their partners



AMY SAYS My boyfriend Danny and I did everything together. We loved going away on mini-breaks to Devon and Cornwall; one of my happiest memories is learning to scuba-dive with him. We'd been together for seven years and engaged for five months when he died in a tragic accident in January 2012; in the middle of the night he tripped and

fell down stairs. I went from planning our wedding to being ruined by grief.

When Kerry contacted me through mutual friends, explaining that her fiancé had also died and asking if I wanted to talk, it was such a relief. My friends and family were amazing, but Kerry knew exactly what I was going through – her partner Luke had taken his own life just two months earlier.

She didn't try to tell me that things would get better; she just listened to me talk. When I found myself running out of Asda after spotting Danny's favourite honey-roasted peanuts on the shelf, she reassured me that I wasn't losing it. Together we joined Widowed And Young (WAY), a support group for men and women under 50 who have lost their partners. It felt good to meet other people like us.

In those early days when we were just helping each other survive, we never imagined we could move on and be ›



Amy & Kerry

happy again. But with each other's support, we're doing it. Danny and Luke will always be the roots of our friendship, but now it goes way beyond the loss we share.

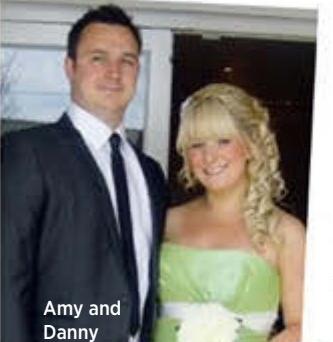
KERRY SAYS Luke was a manic depressive, and when he took his own life in November 2011 I was utterly heartbroken; nobody could do anything to make me feel better. People would say, 'He's in a better place,' and I'd get so angry. We'd been planning our wedding the following summer, and I'd even bought my dress. But even though I couldn't marry

Luke, I changed my surname to his, to show how much he meant to me. When friends suggested I contact

Amy to offer her support, I felt like I had nothing left to give anyone else. But I reached out to her anyway, and our friendship quickly grew. She completely understood why I had to say, 'I love you, Luke,' out loud every night before I went to bed.

Now, we're constantly in touch, and have rebuilt our lives together. In the beginning of our friendship, we only ever talked about Danny and Luke, but these days we're able to laugh together until our stomachs hurt over *Made In Chelsea* – or my disastrous dating stories! I never imagined I'd come this far and be this happy again, and a huge part of that is having an amazing friend in Amy.

• To find out more about WAY, and to get support and advice, visit Widowedandyoung.org.uk



Amy and Danny



Kerry and Luke

We have rebuilt our lives together'



'We live 10,000 miles apart, but are there for each other'

Emily Philippou, 27, a press officer from London, and Madelyn Gover, 30, a media officer from Sydney, met through a chance encounter in a shop



EMILY SAYS I like to think Madelyn was my consolation prize for a failed relationship. I was visiting my Aussie boyfriend in Sydney in 2007 and got chatting to her in the stationery shop she worked in. When she picked up on my accent we started talking about London, where she'd always wanted to visit. She was so funny and sassy, we exchanged email addresses and kept in touch when I went back to the UK. We had so much in common, from our love of festivals to our experiences of long-distance relationships (her boyfriend was in the Army, so he moved around a lot).

A year later, I moved to Sydney to be with my boyfriend. By then Madelyn had gone to live in Canberra, 180 miles away, but I saw her as often as I could.

When I was dumped in 2009, I moved back to London. It was such a huge upheaval, leaving my beloved job as a makeup artist, my home and the new friends I'd worked so hard to make. But Madelyn was still my biggest supporter, Skyping me regularly to lift my spirits. I was so touched when, a year later, she

asked me to be her bridesmaid. I saved up for the plane ticket and on the big day I met her family for the first time, which was lovely. Since then, we've only seen each other twice – once in California at Coachella music festival, and once when she visited the UK – but we're closer than ever and make sure to Skype at least once a fortnight.

In 2013, she suffered the loss of twin boys, who were born prematurely. It was difficult being so far away, but I tried to make sure she knew I was always there for her. Happily, in January Madelyn gave birth to her son, Ernest. It's marked a lovely new chapter in our friendship.

MADELYN SAYS I loved Emily immediately – she's bubbly, wickedly funny and totally fearless. I was so delighted when she moved to Sydney, just a three-hour drive away.

Our time together has always been limited, but it means I appreciate her even more. Losing my sons was the most heartbreaking experience of my life. In the weeks after, when I could

barely pull myself out of bed, Emily was an incredible support. We would Skype and cry together, and she'd email to let me know I was in her thoughts. A message from her gave me courage to face the world; she was my constant – never too

busy. It felt like she was by my side the whole time, despite being on the other side of the world. I can't wait for Ernest to meet her. I want him to know what true friendship looks like. I'm so grateful to call her my best friend. ♦

'She's my constant – never too busy'

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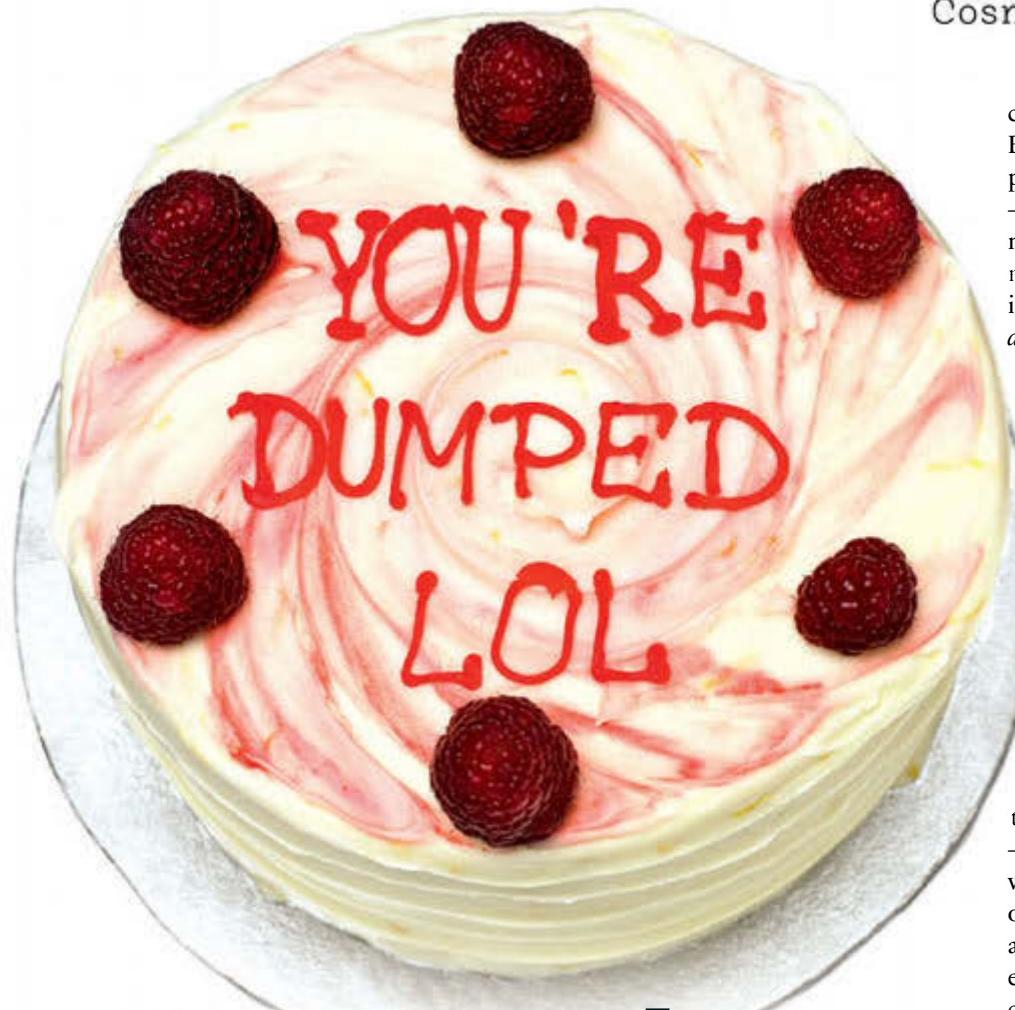
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How to dump someone (without being an ass)

Being dumped sucks... but sometimes being the 'dumper' is even worse. So how the hell are you meant to end things? Follow our advice (and yes, it is OK to do it over email)

1 Don't just wade in there

"First, ask yourself, 'Do I want this to end or do I just want change?'" advises relationship therapist and founder of the 7 Steps To A Better Break-Up app, Sara Davison. "If you've been together more than a few months, maintaining this relationship has taken hard work – so you owe it to yourself to give leaving it some decent thought too. With clients who want to end things, I talk them through my 'no regrets' system before they separate, which involves

putting everything on the table – any issues or dislikes. Try it yourself – write down your bugbears and talk them through with him. Only then can you decide whether it really *is* the right decision." And while it might be tempting, *don't* try to make him dump you; things won't be friendly post-split.

2 Make sure he hears it from you first

Chances are others have sussed out your intentions (maybe your colleague

caught you grimacing at his latest text). But resist the urge to speak to *too* many people about it before you talk to him – he doesn't need to hear it from your mate's boyfriend. "If you do tell anyone, make it clear this is strictly private information," says Sara. "And once you *do* speak to him, reassure him you've kept it on the QT (it's likely he'll be paranoid everybody knows)."

3 Pick your time carefully

So, *you've* made your mind up, but it might come as a major shock to him, so leave plenty of time to discuss it. "Even if it ends up being a quick conversation, he'll be left reeling, so don't tell him before an important meeting or a night out," says Sara. "Ideally, do it at his place so you can leave afterwards." How you tackle it depends on your relationship – a Match.com study showed people who meet online tend to break up online too. "Generally, a good rule is to ask yourself, 'How would *I* like this to end?'" says Sara. "If you don't feel that committed, a heartfelt email is OK. But if you'd be gutted if he dumped you that way, don't do it to him!" Time to delete that draft in your mailbox and take the bus to his place.

4 Be honest

Avoid the temptation to use clichés. "By telling him you're 'not in the place for a relationship' (when actually, you just don't fancy him), you're confusing the situation," Sara says. For him to move on, you need to help him realise why you're not right for each other – and that requires total honesty. "But there's a line – being *too* brutal ('The sex is rubbish,' or 'I fancy other people') will only lead to more heartbreak. Strike the right balance and don't give him false hope if you know there isn't any." If he's angry, try to understand, and remember that even if he seems OK now, he might not be tomorrow. And if he's on the rebound sooner than you'd like, don't rise to it (publicly, at least...).

5 Set boundaries

You need to tell him what happens next, and be clear and firm about where you stand. So have a game plan in place – will you come round next week to ➤



pick up your stuff? Staying in touch over the next few weeks/months will be hard, so sorting it out *now* will work in your favour. If you're going to tell the world (say, by changing your status on Facebook) warn him in advance. Also, avoid mixed messages: don't say one thing and do another. Research by US psychologists reveals men have a harder time adjusting to break-ups because they're unprepared (whereas women will generally have given consideration to the possibility). It'll only make it more gut-wrenching if you phone him when you're drunk, or use your pet name for him in an email. Above all, do *not* have sex with him. It'll only prolong the break-up pain. OK?

6 Manage the post-break-up fall-out

If you *have* to talk, stick to more neutral media such as email rather than text – that way, there'll be less pressure on you to reply at 1am when he's drunk. Decide who you want to remain friends with in your social circle, and if it's unlikely you'll stay chummy with his mates, consider a Facebook cull.

"If you're worried you'll end up poring over photos he's been tagged in, think about blocking him – but give him a heads-up first," Sara says. Finally, however bad things got, don't underestimate what a huge part of your life he was. "Fill that void by setting new goals as soon as you can, whether it's a new gym class, moving house or a holiday with friends – whatever requires concentration and attention," advises Sara. "And ditch that brunch place you went to *every* Saturday – find a new one!"

SPLITSVILLE STORIES

These women have gone through the worst post-break-up moments so you don't have to

Sock it to him

I'd been dating a guy for six months when he ended it abruptly. I had no idea why, and was absolutely devastated. In the following days, I spent my time moping around my house crying – and when I came across a dirty sock of his that he'd left behind, I couldn't bear to throw it out. Instead, I slept with it under my pillow for the next three months. Yes – snuggling up to a gross, crispy man-sock somehow seemed a sane thing to do. Luckily, I eventually came to my senses, rediscovered my self-respect and threw it out – but I still look back on it as a major low-point. **Anna, 27, Middlesex**

Facebook fail

I was idly scanning Facebook while waiting for the bus when I decided to run a search on my ex, Steve*, to see what he was up to. I'd only got as far as typing in his name and hitting 'enter' when the bus arrived, so I forgot all about it. But back home later that day, my housemate asked me

if I was aware that I'd updated my Facebook status to Steve's full name. Horrified, I ran to my computer, realising I must have confused the search and status update boxes. There in black and white was the evidence of my stalking, along with 21 'likes' – most of which were from Steve's friends. There was nothing I could do but own up and update my status to, 'Yes, I was stalking my ex'. Total humiliation!

Lauren, 23, Manchester

Fists of fury

When my boyfriend split up with me, I was devastated. But I still got on well with his friends, so I decided to stay in touch and hang out with them, knowing I'd get to see him too. One night while we were out clubbing, I was in the toilet and overheard two girls talking about someone's 'crazy ex' – and I gradually realised they were talking about me. When one of them said, "We've been seeing each other for about a month now, but have to pretend we're not together while she's here," I snapped. Rushing

out of the ladies, I walked up to my ex and whacked him in the face, before bursting into tears and running out of the club. It took a few weeks for it to dawn on me that I must've looked like a complete weirdo.

Rebecca, 22, Leeds

Family ties

After splitting with my ex of five years, I found myself bursting into tears whenever anybody who didn't know we'd split asked how Greg* was. It was so traumatic telling people about the break-up that when I bumped into his cousin (who'd just been on honeymoon and didn't know) I decided not to say anything. I just nodded at everything she said (such as, "Ooh, you and Greg will be thinking wedding bells soon too!") and made my excuses. I didn't think any more of the conversation until he texted me the next day asking why the hell I was telling his family we were getting married, and that I needed to '*just get over him, ASAP*'. Needless to say, his wanky text helped remind me why we were splitting... **Janie*, 33, Peterborough**

Broken-up boys

Guys have trouble too...

When I split up with my girlfriend of four years we decided to remain friends, even though I wasn't over her *at all*. One night, I went out for dinner with some mates and after a bottle and a half of wine, I decided it would be a good idea to head for her place. When I got there, I saw her new boyfriend sitting on the sofa, which resulted in my breaking down in tears on the doorstep. I was invited inside to calm down, where her new boyfriend pitifully handed me a beer and said, "Don't worry, mate, you'll find someone else." Shameful.

Mark*, 32, Coventry

My ex broke up with me because I wasn't "mature enough" (her words). I bumped into her a few months later, we got chatting and I suggested that we should give it another go. We ended up back at her flat to carry on 'our chat' and I thought my luck was in. She went off to the kitchen so I stripped off and took up a seductive pose on the sofa. As a finishing touch, I popped on some bunny ears that were lying on the floor, as a joke. She came back in, took one look at me and went crazy. "See! This is exactly what I mean – you are so immature it's a joke!" she said, and chuckled me out before I'd even had a chance to put my clothes back on...

Jake*, 24, London ♦

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"IT'S HEAVEN ON A SPOON"

Angela W, Stockport



"SO CREAMY IT'S SHEER BLISS"

Nicole S, home Hawaii, heart London





It just got a hell of a lot easier to tackle your problems. According to new research, not only are we able to come up with answers to life issues while conked out, but they're often better than the ones we concoct while awake. Scientists have found that the dreaming mind can go down the creative path more easily, which leads to better, more innovative solutions.

"When you sleep, the prefrontal cortex of the brain shuts down," explains Deirdre Barrett PhD, author of *The Committee Of Sleep*. "That's the area that controls logic and takes into account social constraints – basically, it'll tell you not to do something because it doesn't conform to social rules. With this part deactivated, you'll be adept at thinking outside the box to formulate more successful ways you normally wouldn't consider, to fix a problem."

Wondering how you'll ever make sense of those weird dreams you have? The thing is, if you train your brain (it's easy – we'll show you), you won't have to decode mysterious scenarios – you'll dream the actual solution vividly. You might, for example, put together the precise words you should say to your boss who's been on your back, or come up with a particular idea that will get your best friend out of her fug. So how do you set yourself up to accomplish this? These three simple steps will get you there...

STEP 1 Start thinking about your problem a little before you climb between the sheets. "When something is on your mind at bedtime, you're more likely to dream about it," says Dr Ernest Hartmann, author of *The*

Nature And Functions Of Dreaming. "The more you mull it over, the more specific your solution will be." Jot down your dilemma – this will help fix it in your mind. Or put an object on your bedside table that reminds you of the situation – eg, a photo of your mum if you've been arguing. Obviously, you don't need a dream to figure out something practical like what to wear to an interview. "This technique works best when you're grappling with something you're emotionally invested in, such as a family drama or handling a tricky situation at work. The more important the issue is, the more likely you are to come up with your solution as you sleep," says Dr Hartmann.

STEP 2 Keep your phone or a pad of paper and a pen next to you, so if you wake in the middle of the night you can record or take notes. "As you know, dreams are fleeting," says Deirdre, "so write down key details: words you used, points you made, body language employed. The more precise your notes, the easier it'll be to recall your full solution."

STEP 3 Lie in bed in the morning and go over what you wrote down. "It's important to consider as much as you can as soon as possible," says Deirdre. "Once you get up and do things, your brain becomes flooded with other information that eclipses your resolution." You may need to tweak your solution a bit. Remember, the part of your brain that regulates social norms was turned off, so you'll have to include at least some of those factors back in, to ensure your actions are successful in the waking world.

You can solve problems while you dream

Top psychologists have uncovered something amazing: when you're struggling with a life dilemma, one of your best tactics is to get some sleep...

A close-up photograph of a woman with blonde hair and blue eyes. She is wearing a white striped shirt. Her hands, with dark blue nail polish, are holding a yellow sticky note against her cheek. The sticky note features a hand-drawn red smiley face with two dots for eyes and a curved line for a mouth.

WHEN YOUR **BOSS** HATES YOU

What do you do if you suspect your manager is just not that into you? **Jessica Migala** has this survival guide

worked at a magazine once (not *Cosmo*!), and something was always wrong – with me. My hobbies were odd (hot yoga). I was too quiet in meetings (I think before I speak). I didn't gossip (what?!). I was so beaten down by negative boss feedback that my work slipped... making things worse.

Clashing with a supervisor is a top reason for quitting a job, says career coach Jenny Blake, author of *Life After College*. Not surprising when bosses control your salary, promotions and holiday – and you spend most waking hours together. So how can you smooth over friction? And when is it time to bail?

Step 1 IT MAY NOT BE YOU

Maybe she's brief on emails or he sighs during calls, but don't jump to conclusions. Your boss might be stand-offish, chronically stressed, moody, going through something... or a jerk. "We can never truly know what someone is thinking," says Jenny. Hold off on the death spiral of paranoia.

Step 2 MIMIC YOUR BOSS

Be yourself, but follow your boss's lead, says Alexandra Levit, author of business handbook *Blind Spots*. He's chatty? Discuss a project in person rather than emailing. She's all business, *all* the time? Cool it on the chattiness or you may come off as unproductive.

Step 3 HAVE A MEETING

Still getting dagger eyes? You may have done something wrong. Set up a meeting with your boss and ask him a specific question, like: "I got the feeling you were frustrated when I gave you my update in yesterday's meeting, and I didn't know if it was directed towards me." Tell him you're open to feedback, then listen calmly. Ask, "How can I make it better?" Then do it.

Step 4 TALK TO HR

If that doesn't resolve the problem, ask HR about a sideways move. They may be loyal to senior management, cautions Alexandra, so choose your words carefully. If you're being physically or sexually harassed, report it – HR are obliged to help. If you're being verbally bullied, it may be harder to prove and to get legal protection. Give HR a chance

to help, but prepare yourself for the fact that you may have to find another job.

Step 5 GET AN EXIT PLAN

"If you've been unhappy for more than six months and have tried to improve things, it may be time to go," says Jenny. Just don't complain about your job to a prospective employer; be positive and focus on the great work you've done. If you're asked to name a referee, choose another manager you click with or a mentor from a past job.

Step 6 STAY STRONG

If the thought of facing your boss on Monday (or any day) freaks you out, set up energising plans, such as lunch with colleagues or a mentor. Each week, make one change that gets you closer to your next job (like updating your CV).

Step 7 LEAVE ON A HIGH

Don't give the metaphorical middle finger on your way out. Take the high road and tell Cruella de Boss, 'I found a job that better matches my skill set.' That's the line I used four years ago, and I'm proud I kept my cool. I'm a full-time freelance writer now. Clients praise me for my hard-working attitude, and my new boss (me!) always approves my holidays.

Peek in the purse of... **ABBEY CLANCY**



"When you have a child, a small purse just doesn't cut it [Abbey has a four-year-old daughter, Sophia, and another baby on the way], so I always have a big bag of junk. My favourite is my Alaïa black-and-white bag,

I love it so much I've bought three! I'd worn out my first one, so I got a new one in a sale, then I saw one in the window of a second-hand shop and couldn't resist. I don't change my bag often; I have one for winter and one for summer. I like things that are affordable but good-quality. "I never have any cash on me – Pete [Crouch, her husband] says I'm like the Queen! I have my cards, makeup, perfume and loads of receipts too. I'm quite scruffy. Oh, and right now I've got a packet of Rich Tea biscuits with me [for any morning-sickness moments] although they're not *usually* in there!"



Karen Brady
SORTS YOUR LIFE OUT

Cosmo's resident superwoman solves your work dilemmas

When my manager split with her fiancé, I became her shoulder to cry on. Now she thinks we're best friends. I like her, but it's affecting my work and I can't keep making excuses to avoid the pub. How can I keep her at arm's length without damaging my career? *Charlotte**, 26, Birmingham

KAREN SAYS It's great she relies on you – it shows you're well-liked – but it's important this doesn't go too far. Your life could end up being nothing but work, and your colleagues might start resenting you or treating you differently. It's business – nothing personal – so have a conversation with her at work (not at the pub where things can get too cosy). Explain honestly that while you think she's a great manager and you love working for her (very important!), your friendship is interfering with work. Tell her you're struggling to stay on top of things, using tangible examples like, 'I'm can't focus on this project because we're emailing a lot.' There's a good chance she will realise her behaviour is becoming unprofessional, but if she doesn't, focus on forging relationships with your other colleagues – while remaining polite and friendly to your boss, of course. ♦



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Dress, £168; bag,
£298, both All Saints.
Sunglasses, £92, DKNY
at Sunglass Hut. Ring,
£160, Daisy Knights >

UP YOUR STREET-STYLE ANTE WITH CLEVER KHAKIS,
HOT SHIRT DRESSES AND STATEMENT SUNNIES

URBAN CHIC

FASHION SHELLY VELLA PHOTOGRAPHS JENNIFER MASSAUX

Dress, £620, M Missoni.
Rings, from £25, Paula
Bostock at PB Jewellery.
Wrap ring (worn on thumb),
£195, Daisy Knights





Dress, £255, DKNY. Shoes,
£1,530, Giuseppe Zanotti >



Dress, £200, Day Birger et
Mikkelsen. Shoes, £89, Dune.
Bag, £745, Christian Louboutin



Top, £169, Gestuz.
Sunglasses, £350, Prada
at Sunglasses Shop >



Jumpsuit, £45, River Island. Boots, £660, Jerome C Rousseau. Belt, £78, Lowie. Necklace, £150, Paula Bostock at PB Jewellery

Coat, £65; trousers, £38,
both Asos. Top, £12.99,
H&M. Trainers, £150,
Essentiel. Watch, £75,
Nixon. Lace dimes, £150
for a pair, Daisy Knights >



Shirt, £390; skirt,
£390; bag, £595, all
Mulberry. Boots, £775,
Christian Louboutin





Dress, as before. Necklace,
£150, Paula Bostock
at PB Jewellery

Hair Ian Djurkin at
Artist-management.net.
Makeup Brian Duprey
for Mac Cosmetics at
Judy Casey Inc.
Model Amanda Smith at Next.
Fashion Assistant Katie Saxon.
With thanks to Hotel
Victor, Miami,
Hotelvictorsouthbeach.com.

Ashore THINGS

Inspired by the Orient and perfect for a summer getaway

Fashion SHELLY VELLA Photography MARK CANT



Kimono, £65, Oasis.
Jumpsuit, £65, Next >



Jacket, £79.99, H&M.
Briefs, £6, Marks &
Spencer. Temporary
tattoos (throughout),
£13 per sheet, Seekers
Of The Sun

Top, £18, River
Island >



Jumpsuit, £40,
Dorothy Perkins.
Bangles, £150 each;
bracelet, £195, all
Alex Monroe





Top, £35; shorts, £28,
both River Island >

THIS PAGE
Top, £28, Dorothy Perkins.
Trousers, £40, River Island

OPPOSITE PAGE
Top, £40, Oasis. Trousers,
£28, Asos. Earrings, £720,
Sweet Pea. Bangles, £150
each, Alex Monroe

Hair Heath Massi at Frank Agency, using Hair Rehab London. Makeup Lisa Valencia at Carol Hayes, using YSL and Seekers Of The Sun. Model Amanda at Milk Management. Fashion Coordinator Holly Coopey. With thanks to Kuramathi Island Resort Maldives, Kuramathi.com

Go behind the scenes at
[Cosmopolitan.co.uk/travel/
cosmo-loves-maldives](http://Cosmopolitan.co.uk/travel/cosmo-loves-maldives)





DESERT COLOUR SCENE

VIBRANT GEOMETRIC PRINTS AND ABSTRACT SHAPES FIND THEIR HOME IN THE DESERT OF THE WILD WEST

FASHION SAIREY STEMP ✽ PHOTOGRAPHS MARK ANDREW

A VIVID BUSTIER AND SKATER SKIRT ALLURE IN THE DESERT
Top, £240; skirt, £320, both Just Cavalli. Shoes, £185; earrings, £55, both Bimba Y Lola. Bangle, £10, Freedom at Topshop





**ABSTRACT AND
GORGEOUS, A
STATEMENT NECKLACE
TAKES CENTRE STAGE**
Dress, £504; necklace,
£336, both Kirsty Ward.
Earrings, £159, Anton
Heunis at Cadenza ▶

THIS PAGE
AN AZURE ASYMMETRIC
DRESS FITS A DRAMATIC
BACKDROP

Dress, £169, Three Floor.
Sunglasses, £105, Marc by
Marc Jacobs. Necklace,
£65, Tatty Devine. Bangles,
£6 each, Cath Kidston

OPPOSITE PAGE
DAZZLE AMONG THE
CACTI IN A TRIANGLE-
PRINT CUT-OUT
MINIDRESS

Dress, £295; shoes, £150,
both DKNY. Bangle, £10,
Freedom at Topshop ›







THIS PAGE
FLASHES OF CITRINE AND
CITRUS ORANGE ENLIVEN
A SIMPLE SHIFT DRESS
Dress, £190, Bimba Y Lola.
Necklace, £25, Freedom
at Topshop. Bangles, £35
each, Anna Lou Of London

OPPOSITE PAGE
CONTRASTING A SPORTY
PRINT JACKET AND
ZIG-ZAG JUMPSUIT
Jacket, £125, Topshop Unique.
Jumpsuit, £478, M Missoni.
Swimsuit (worn underneath),
£140, Marianna G. Earrings,
£45; necklace, £62, both
Bimba Y Lola ›





THIS PAGE

HIT THE ROAD IN GEOMETRIC PRINTS THAT GO VA-VA-VOOM
Top and skirt, £109 for set, House Of CB. Bag, £95, Pinko. Necklace (just seen), £80, Bimba Y Lola. Bangle, £10, Freedom at Topshop

OPPOSITE PAGE

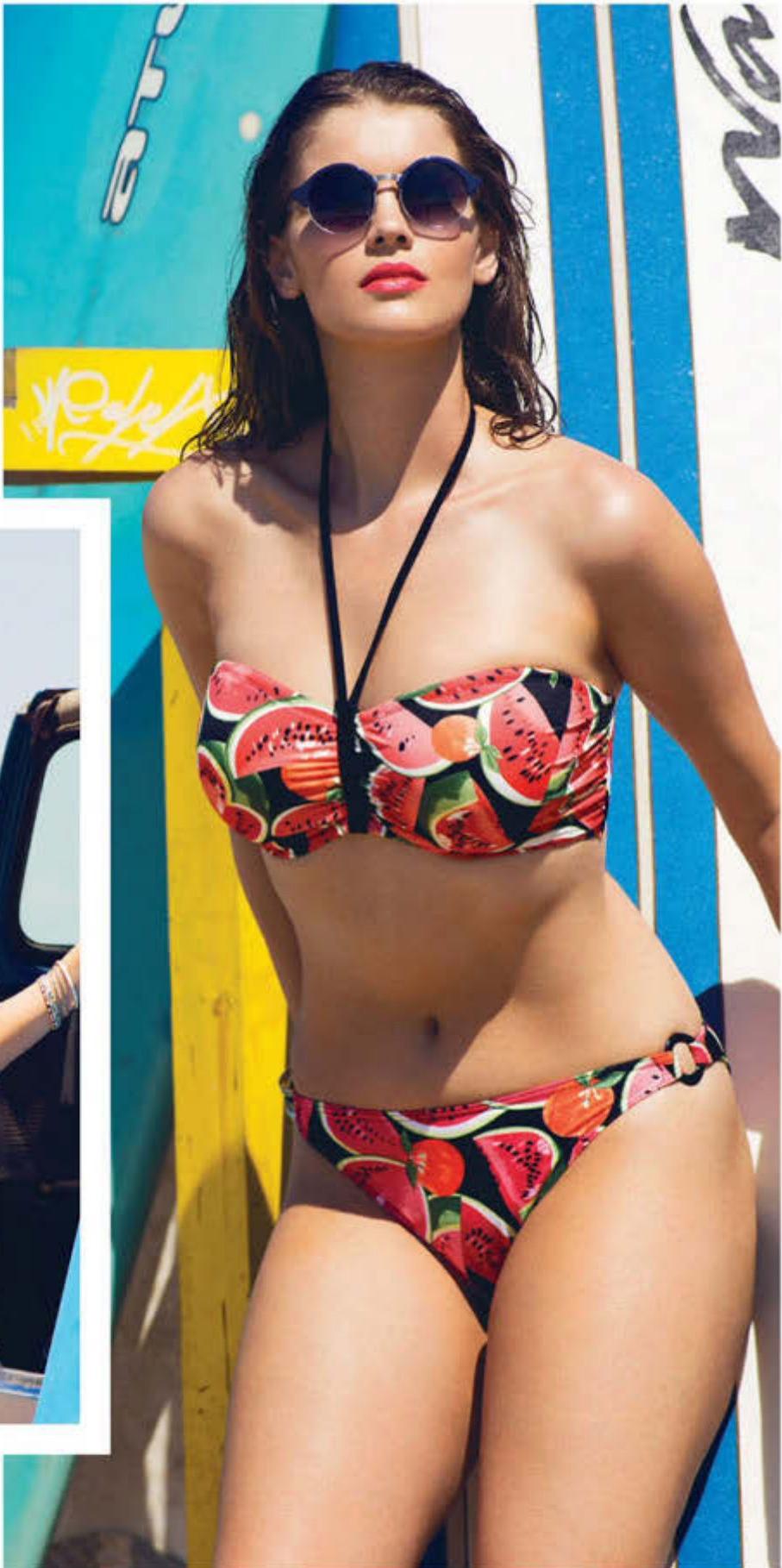
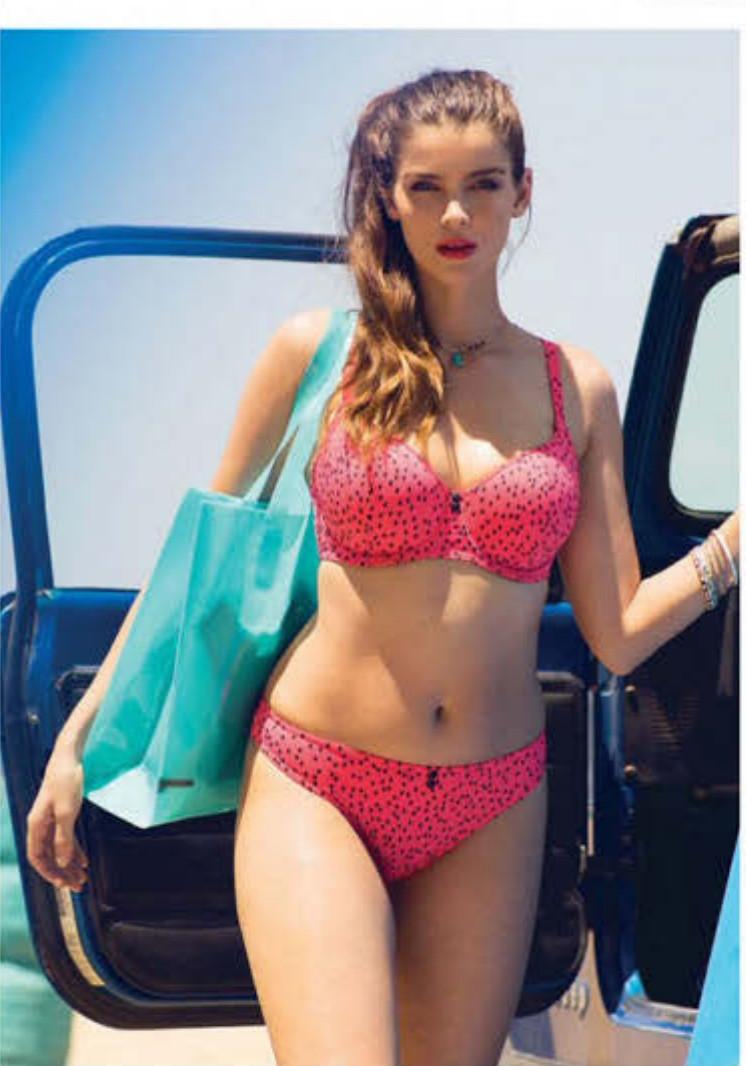
A SUNDOWNER ONE-PIECE THAT PACKS A PUNCH
Swimsuit, £248, Mara Hoffman at Beachcafe. Bangles, £35 each, Anna Lou Of London

Hair Noah Hatton for Redken/Cutter at Judy Casey. Makeup Regine Thorre. Nails Calgel and IZ Beauty Of London. Model Rachel Alexander at Supreme Management. Fashion Assistant Katie Saxon. With thanks to Tanque Verde Ranch Tanqueverderanch.com.



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Catwalk to curvy

THE BEST FASHION FIXES FOR CURVES

Laura Puddy picks the super-smart buys that'll work style magic on your shape

We all have our fashion flashpoints – whether it's the eternal quest for a strapless bra that won't let a DD+ bust down, or the never-ending search for jeans that sculpt a booty to rival Kim K's. Look no further: whatever your needs, this season there are tons of great fashion fixes for curves. With all these amazing pieces, there's every reason to make the most of what you've got. Here are my top picks:

You want: flattering workwear

Marks & Spencer has developed a genius new officewear collection that looks super-stylish while flattering your figure (1). Each piece in the Secret Slimming range features hidden support lining – like Spanx. I'm a big fan of the dresses – perfect for hugging your shape. Sizes 8-22.

You want: to sculpt your stomach

A pair of magic knickers from Mimi Holliday are a



Laura wears:
Jacket, £34.99,
New Look.
Dress, £55,
Autograph
at Marks &
Spencer.
Accessories,
Laura's own

must-have (2). Their special one-way stretch system ensures a smooth silhouette, minus the bulge lines associated with some types of shapewear. Plus, with pretty lace and a matching bra, you'll want to show them off! Sizes s-xl.

You're size 16+

Check out The Design Collective for Evans (3), featuring collaborations with designers such as Giles Deacon and Clements Ribeiro. Pieces have been reworked especially to suit voluptuous figures. There are some real show-stoppers in the collection (don't miss the printed pieces) in fabrics that drape really well. Sizes 14-32.

You want: jeans to boost your booty

Bum-lifting jeans from Beauty In Curves (4) will change your life! The Secret Sculpt fabric creates a bottom-shaping effect to make your derrière appear perkier, while smoothing your hips and thighs. The 'ankle slim' jeans are my favourite style; they're designed to fit close to your calf, but they're not as tight as skinnies. Sizes 10-22.

You want: a strapless bra for larger boobs

Curvy Kate knows exactly how to cater for bigger busts. Its ultimate strapless bra (5) uses clever engineering to ensure uplift up to a J-cup – yes, really. Super-support comes from underneath the cups to keep your bust firmly in place – with no drooping. It's probably the best strapless bra I've ever worn and it's purse-friendly too, at £32. Sizes 28J-38G.



1 Workwear that streamlines your curves. Dress, £69, Marks & Spencer

2 Pretty shapewear to smooth and sculpt. Bra, £56; briefs, £48, both Mimi Holliday



3 Designer collaborations for curvy shapes. Top, £45; skirt, £45, both Clements Ribeiro, The Design Collective for Evans



4 These jeans are made for bootyllicious babes. Jeans, £145, Beauty In Curves

5 The DD+ strapless bra that actually works. Bra, £32; briefs, £16, both Curvy Kate

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1
Designer style

Dress, £225,
Topshop Unique.
Shoes, £475,
Rupert Sanderson.
Jewel ring, £446,
Maria Nilsdotter.
Silver ring, £69,
Sophie by Sophie

Catwalk TO COSMEO

*Sugary-sweet tones are in
- here's how to get the look*

EVERYDAY PASTELS



Bag, £470, MCM



Dress,
£269,
Just
Cavalli



Sunglasses,
£362, Dita



Top, £75,
Whistles



Top, £875,
Zeynep Kartal.
Skirt, £150,
Longchamp.
Bag, £895,
Any
Hindmarch.
Ear cuff,
£312, Maria
Nilsdotter.
Ring, as
before

CHECK OUT OUR STYLE
STEALS OVER THE PAGE



Style steals

Jacket, £55, Very.
 T-shirt, £25,
 Essentiel. Skirt,
 £125, Coast.
 Trainers, £28, Next



Top, £20, Miss Selfridge.
 Necklace, £25, Pret A Portobello



PS
 Catwalk style for spring/summer was full of sugary pastels, tulle and summery leather. Go for it with a frilly dress - you can toughen it up with a biker jacket and a clompy shoe. Or give a nod to the trend with a slinky frock and barely-there sandals. And try a belted trench for day-to-night style.



Shorts,
 £59,
 Minkpink



Coat, £149,
 Marks & Spender



Shoes,
 £24.99,
 New Look



Dress,
 £55,
 Asos



Top, £14.99, H&M



Sunglasses, £18,
 River Island ♡

Watermelons

= EXPLOSIVELY FRESH =



SHAY & BLUE
London

COSMOPOLITAN

THE CURVE EDIT

Time to celebrate your curves! Step into spring's hottest looks that will fit, flaunt and flatter every body shape

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EVANS

EVANS
EVANS.CO.UK



ART DIRECTOR DALJIT KAUR BABBER,
STYLING LAURA PUDDY

Jacket, £55, Evans.
Jumpsuit, £65, Next.
Necklace, £30, Daisy
& Eve at Evans.
Shoes, £45, Schuh >



Print Cami
£24

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH EVANS

CONTENTS

MY OWN STYLE ID

Must-haves and wardrobe staples – an insight into what our curvy girls love



FLIRTY FLORALS

Pretty pastels and floral prints to show off your shape. It's fashion inspiration for the season ahead



5
3
0
9
15

THE EDIT: DESIGN COLLECTIVE FOR EVANS
The collection that champions all shapes and sizes – and made history at LFW



6 WAYS TO WEAR
From fashion bloggers to Cosmo readers: how these girls with curves are rocking printed trousers this spring



SHOP SAVVY

Date for your diary: join Evans and Cosmo in stores nationwide on Friday 1 and Saturday 2 May 2015 to pick up a lucky scratchcard and win guaranteed prizes from discounts of 25% or 50%, or even win your shopping for free!
Don't forget you can also get your Evans fashion fix with a 20% off discount in Evans stores nationwide and at Evans.co.uk until Monday 4th May. Simply show this page in store or use the code COSMOSS15 at the online checkout. >

MY OWN

Our girls with curves tell us about their personal style,



BLOGGER

GRACIE FRANCESCA

Gracie is a vlogger and blogger known as Uglyfaceofbeauty (Graciefrancesca.com)

WHAT OR WHO IS YOUR STYLE INSPIRATION?

A lot of my style inspo is taken from the everyday girl out on the street. I find I get inspired walking around London or scouring Instagram.

DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE IN THREE WORDS:

Casual, fun, comfortable.

WHAT'S YOUR WARDROBE STAPLE?

A check shirt with a leather jacket.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ITEM IN YOUR WARDROBE?

My patent Dr Martens shoes. So chic!

DO YOU PREFER TO DRESS UP OR DRESS DOWN?

I love to wear a casual outfit, but I'll dress it up with heels.

MODEL & BLOGGER

LOUISE O'REILLY

Louise is a model and blogger known as Style Me Curvy (Stylemecurvy.blogspot.co.uk)

WHAT OR WHO IS YOUR STYLE INSPIRATION?

I love attention to detail – shoes, jewellery, a good handbag. And Olivia Palermo!

DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE IN THREE WORDS:

Girly, biker, chic.

WHAT'S YOUR WARDROBE STAPLE?

A good biker jacket, I have a few styles in various colours. They're so versatile and instantly put a new twist on any outfit.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ITEM IN YOUR WARDROBE?

My Mulberry handbag! It's my baby.

DO YOU PREFER TO DRESS UP OR DRESS DOWN?

Because of the nature of my job I need to be able to go straight from a shoot to an event – so I dress in-between the two!

BLOGGER

CALLIE THORPE

Callie is a fashion and lifestyle blogger based in London (Fromthecornersofthecurve.com)

WHAT OR WHO IS YOUR STYLE INSPIRATION?

I always look to other bloggers for fashion inspiration; they are more relatable than celebrities who either aren't my size or are wearing something way out of my budget.

DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE IN THREE WORDS:

Comfortable, sassy, high-street.

WHAT'S YOUR WARDROBE STAPLE?

Most definitely my leather jacket – it goes with everything and can completely change an outfit. Leather jackets are super-versatile.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ITEM IN YOUR WARDROBE?

My ripped black skinny jeans from Evans, they're easy to throw on, stylish and comfy.

TRAINERS OR HEELS?

You'll find me in Nike Air Max or New Balance!

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EVANS

STYLE ID

what they love to wear and what's in their wardrobes...



MODEL

LAURA CATTERALL

Laura is a model with 12+ UK Model Management and travels all over the world for work

WHAT OR WHO IS YOUR STYLE INSPIRATION?

I take inspiration from Phoebe Philo, Emmanuelle Alt and Clémence Poésy – they all have different body shapes from me, but I'm inspired by their effortless cool.

DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE IN THREE WORDS:

Classic, tailored, relaxed.

WHAT'S YOUR WARDROBE STAPLE?

A great pair of jeans. I'm loving Paige.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ITEM IN YOUR WARDROBE?

My Burberry wool coat: it's warm, structured and can be worn over anything.

TRAINERS OR HEELS?

Trainers for running around town and heels for helping me get into character for work.

READER

EMMA DEAN

Emma is a Cosmo girl who loves to mix high-street bargains with a little bit of luxury

WHAT OR WHO IS YOUR STYLE INSPIRATION?

I really love Rochelle Humes' style; she always looks effortlessly stylish.

WHAT'S YOUR WARDROBE STAPLE?

My jeans! I tend to wear jeans a lot – you can dress them up or down, with a simple shirt and necklace or with a causal T-shirt and blazer. You can't go wrong with a pair of great-fitting jeans!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ITEM IN YOUR WARDROBE?

A gorgeous Karen Millen dress that I wore to my cousin's wedding. It's a beautiful nude colour with a ruffle effect a round the hem. I just need an excuse to wear it again!

DO YOU PREFER TO DRESS UP OR DRESS DOWN?

I prefer to dress up.

READER

RACHAEL BLOUNT

Rachael is a Cosmo reader and loves to rock her curves in pretty dresses and heels

WHAT OR WHO IS YOUR STYLE INSPIRATION?

Holly Willoughby – she always looks classy. I also adore '50s fashion, especially full-circle skirted collared dresses worn with petticoats.

DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE IN THREE WORDS:

Classic, '50s, feminine.

WHAT'S YOUR WARDROBE STAPLE?

A handmade white petticoat – it makes all my dresses and skirts look amazing.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ITEM IN YOUR WARDROBE?

My favourite item is a black Karen Millen full-skirted dress with sweetheart neckline and gold lace embroidery all over.

TRAINERS OR HEELS?

Always heels! >

6 WAYS TO WEAR

Check out how to rock this season's must-have printed trousers, £20, Evans...

A long-line jacket is perfect for skimming your thighs and bum. An ideal look for pear shapes'

Jacket, £50, Simply Be. Top, £16, Evans. Shoes, £24.99, New Look

'This season's must-have denim jacket is not only totally on-trend for S/S15, it's a great arm cover-up too'

Jacket, £38; vest, £5; both Evans. Shoes, £29.99, New Look.

'A classic biker jacket never goes out of style. Go for a snug fit for extra cool factor'

Jacket, £60; top, £16; shoes, £25; all Evans

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EVANS

'For a sports-luxe vibe, try a bomber jacket – great for breaking up a thicker middle and creating definition'

Jacket, £45, Anna Scholz for Simply Be. Top, £45, The Curve. Shoes, £50, Schuh



'Go for the co-ordinating jacket for a catwalk-inspired look'

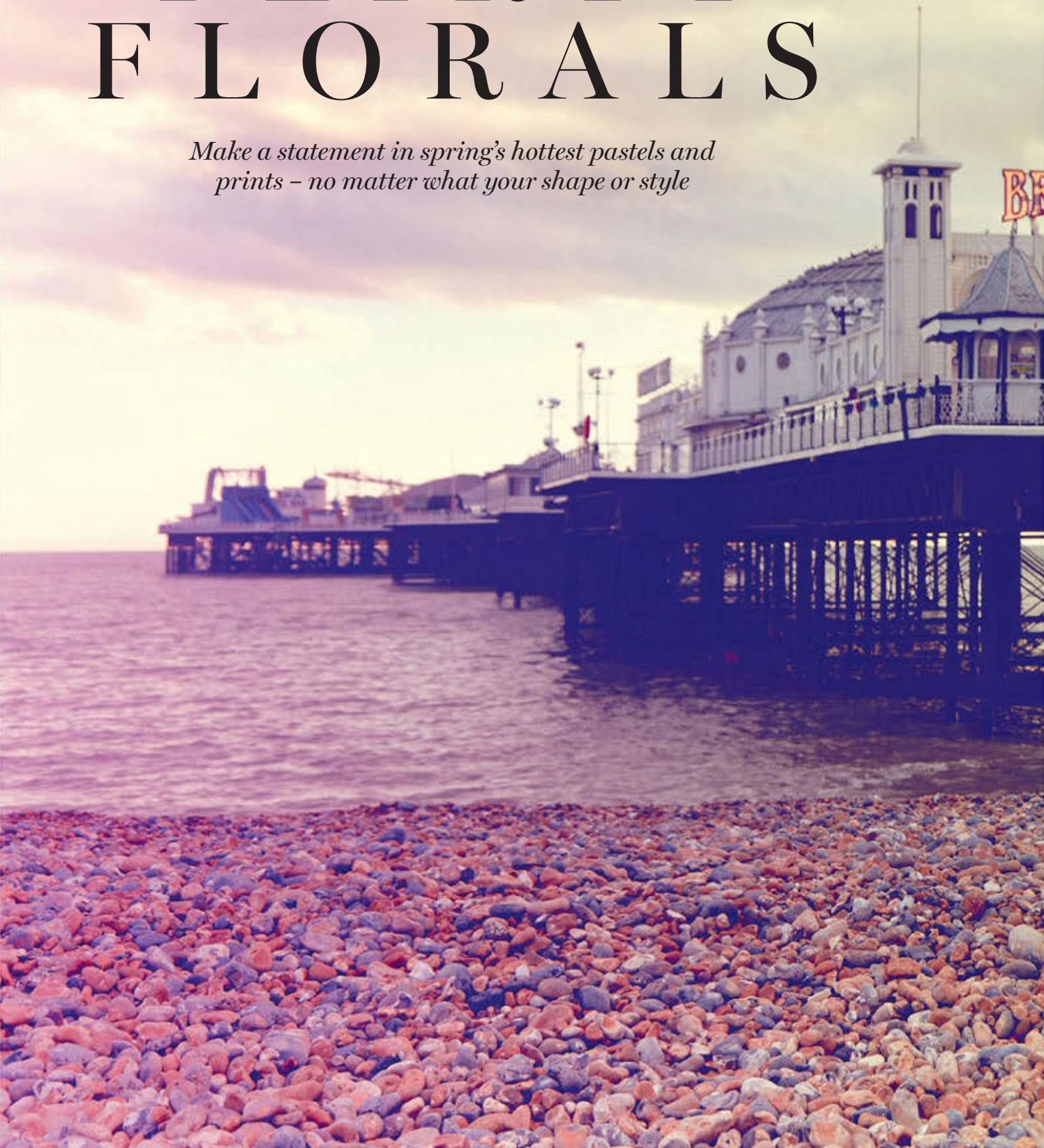
Jacket, £28; top, £16; both Evans.
Shoes, £65, Schuh

'For a low-key look, simply add a casual knit. Instant easy chic!'

Top, £22.99, New Look. Shoes, £45, Schuh >

FLIRTY FLORALS

Make a statement in spring's hottest pastels and prints – no matter what your shape or style





Jacket, £65,
Red Herring at
Debenhams.
Dress, £75,
Preen/Edition
at Debenhams.
Shoes, £45,
Schuh >



TURBO



OPPOSITE PAGE
(Left) Jacket, £36;
top, £16; skirt, £35;
shoes, £25; all Evans
(Right) Jacket, £60, Next.
Dress, £45, Simply Be.
Shoes, £65, Office

THIS PAGE
Dress, £250, Coast >



Kimono, £25;
top, £16; jeans,
£30, all Evans.
Shoes, £55, Next

(Left) Top, £28; skirt, £42; both Next
(Right) Jacket, £20, Boohoo.
Jumpsuit, £95, Coast >





Jacket, £55; top,
£25; culottes,
£45; all Evans

THE EDIT

*Hitting stores
this season – the
revolutionary
Design Collective
for Evans is a
must-shop!*



LUCKY SCRATCH CARD

BE A FASHION WINNER WITH YOUR LUCKY EVANS SCRATCHCARD

Join Evans and *Cosmopolitan* magazine ***in stores nationwide*** on ***Friday 1 and Saturday 2 May*** to pick up your ***lucky scratch card*** and win guaranteed prizes from discounts of 25% or 50%, or even your shopping for free! It's the perfect way to up the style stakes this summer. Everyone's a winner, baby!

20% OFF FOR COSMO READERS

Don't forget you can still get your Evans fashion fix with a **20% off discount** available in Evans stores nationwide and at Evans.co.uk **until Monday 4 May**. To update your wardrobe for S/S15 and shop the very best of the collection, simply present this page in store or shop online using code COSMOSS15.

Terms and conditions: Scratch cards available in Evans standalone stores, Evans within Outfit and concessions with selected BHS nationwide on Friday 1 and Saturday 2 May 2015 only. Not valid online. Ask a member of the team in store to receive your scratch card. Available while stocks last. Full terms and conditions available at Evans.co.uk/lucky or in stores.

Reader offer entitles you to 20% off full-price items purchased online at Evans.co.uk and in Evans stores throughout the UK and ROI from 01/04/2015 until 04/05/2015. To get your discount, please take this page in to an Evans store (store to enter till code 35), or at Evans.co.uk enter code COSMOSS15 at the checkout. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion, excludes delivery charges and is not valid for the purchase of gift cards/vouchers or for paying customer accounts. There can be no cash alternative. Offer not open to employees of Evans, Arcadia Group or anyone else associated with this offer. Promoter: Arcadia Group Brands Limited trading as Evans, Colegrave House, 70 Berners Street, London, W1T 3NL.

After making history for being the first plus-size brand to be showcased at London Fashion Week, Evans has started a 'plus-size revolution' – and this season sees the launch of its first ever Design Collective.

The LFW show included pieces from Collection by Evans, which featured designs from Cut For Evans winner Yvonne Shu Yao and reworked pieces from renowned

designers Clements Ribeiro, Giles Deacon, Hema Kaul, Jamie Wei Huang, Lulu Liu and Vita Gottlieb.

The collection not only offers an amazing array of styles that flatter a fuller figure and work for different body shapes, but also fashion-forward designs that prove style has no size – a tagline Evans has adopted.

With amazing prints, luxe fabrics and pops of colour, the S/S15 collections at Evans are simply stunning and offer on-trend, design-led pieces for sizes 14-32. Collection by Evans

is available now and Design Collective will launch from May in the Marble Arch store in London and online at Evans.co.uk.

For more information, behind-the-scenes action from the LFW show and exclusive news stories, go to Evans.co.uk/stylehasnosize.

You can shop all the amazing Evans looks in stores nationwide, online at Evans.co.uk and via your mobile. Don't forget, if you choose next-day delivery when shopping online, you can either collect in store next day or have it delivered via home delivery (if you order before 7pm). What's more, there's free delivery on all orders over £40 and free returns!

WIN A VIP FASHION EXPERIENCE!

Enter our competition for a chance to live the life of a fashion VIP. Two lucky readers (with a plus one) will win:

- Onenights' stay in London's Chiltern Firehouse
 - Tickets to the Alexander McQueen exhibition at the V&A Museum
 - 'Fashion' afternoon tea at the Berkeley Hotel
 - A £500 personal-shopping experience at Evans, Marble Arch
- To enter, visit Evans.co.uk/VIPFashion. Full terms and conditions are available at Evans.co.uk/VIPFashion



EVANS
EVANS.CO.UK

The Edit

**SPRING'S
BRIGHT
BUDGET BUYS**

Kit yourself out in this season's fashion brights, all for under £100



Lemon & yellow

Put a citrus spring in your step





Jumper, £40,
Laura Ashley

Clutch, £75, Lulu Guinness



Clutch, £22.50, Accessoryo



Shoes,
£69,
Dune

Necklace,
£11.99, Truffle
Shuffle

Blazer,
£55,
Oasis



Trousers,
£27.50, Marks
& Spender



Top, £84.95,
Maison Scotch

All the pinks

Hot lipstick hues and sugary pastels are a must



Dress, £38, Debenhams



Bag, £20,
Dorothy Perkins



Dress, £85, Asos



Bag, £55,
Benetton



Earrings,
£10,
Adorning
Ava



Dress, £45, Threads
at Stylistpick



Shoes, £45,
Lacoste Footwear

Shoes, £75, Dune



Bracelet, £56,
Mare Sole
Amore at Salt
Resortwear



Bag, £35,
Ben de
Lisi at
Debenhams



Clutch, £35, Therapy
at House Of Fraser



Culottes,
£40,
Dorothy
Perkins



Dress, £32,
Red Herring at
Debenhams



Trousers, £38,
Rocha John Rocha
at Debenhams



Earrings, £15, Love Thy
Accessories at My Flash Trash
Mall



Jacket,
£59, Per
Una at
Marks &
Spencer



Trainers, £50,
Superga



Skirt, £45, Yumi



Top, £75,
Comptoir des
Cotonniers



Shorts, £27, Very



Watch, £65,
Olivia Burton



Bag, £40, Aldo



Shorts,
£32, Oasis



Top, £84.95,
Maison Scotch



Dress, £55, Oasis



Skirt, £80, Izzue

Top, £16, Simply Be



Top, £30,
Vans



Jeans, £49.50,
Jack Wills



Shoes, £30,
Rob Ryan
for F-Troupe



Dress, £65, Asos



Top, £22.99, Superdry



Bag, £25, Next



Dress, £42,
Warehouse

Gorgeous greens

Get into mint, emerald
and palm-leaf prints



The super blues

Aqua, rich azure and navy rule





Lilacs & purple

Powdery mauve gives way to deep purple



Dress it up

Ready to ramp up the glamour? Claire's has got your next night out covered with its awesome new season's range of stylish accessories...



OPPOSITE PAGE

Claudia wears: tiara, £10; ear cuff, £6; top choker, £4.50; bottom choker, £10; temporary tattoos (on wrist), £4.50

Ella wears: hair clip, £10; top necklace, £16; bottom necklace, £14; clutch, £14; left bracelet, £8; right bracelet, £7

Olivia wears: Headband, £14; necklace, £4; pearls, £6; clutch, £14; rings, £4.50 for a set; temporary tattoos (on wrist), £4.50



FROM LEFT
Claudia wears:
jewellery and
temporary tattoos,
as before; nail polish, £3

Olivia wears: blusher
compact, £4.50

Ella wears:
jewellery, as before;
hairband, £8



Ella wears:
headpiece, £12;
lipgloss, £4.50 for
set of four; body
chain, £10; lipstick
compact, £4.50

Your girls' night out is about to take one seriously glam turn. Whether you rock a classic, boho or edgy look, Claire's has got it *all* covered. With everything from ornate accessories and body jewellery, to detailed headpieces, hairbands and makeup (as modelled by bloggers Olivia Purvis from Whatoliviadid.com and Ella Gregory of Cocosteaparty.com), you'll find all the essentials you need to take that outfit to the next level.

claire's

Right: necklace, £16;
nail varnish in Pastel
Splatter, £3.50; brush,
£7.50, lipstick in Nude £3.50

Go to claires.co.uk to find
your nearest store and
follow @clairespress and
@claireseurope for all
the latest updates...



You use it to face the day
We use it to face cancer



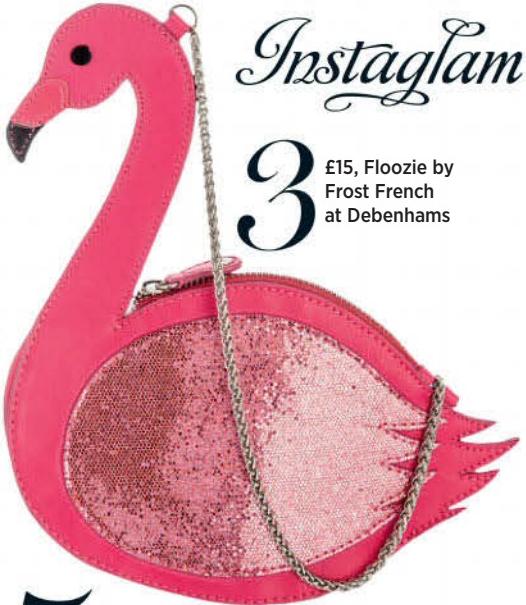
look good **feel better**
FACING CANCER WITH CONFIDENCE

#WARPAINT4LIFE

Self-esteem is important to all women, it just happens to be in sharper focus for those who have cancer. That's the reason Look Good Feel Better exists. We have been helping to combat the visible side effects of cancer treatment for over 20 years through free confidence-boosting skincare and make-up workshops and masterclasses across the UK and worldwide.
lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk/warpaint4life

Instaglam

3 £15, Floozie by Frost French at Debenhams



1



2 £245, Lulu Guinness

5 £285, Kate Spade New York



4

£16, Claire's

6

£28, Asos



9

£32, Next

The TOP 10 Novelty bags

Playful, kitsch and totally cool – these beauties add fun to every outfit

7

£25, Accessorize



8

£12.99, New Look



10 £29.50, Marks & Spencer Limited Edition





In need of a spring in your step? We all struggle with our body image from time to time, so we've come up with a sure-fire plan to boost those confidence levels if they're flagging – starting with gorgeous lingerie that's *guaranteed* to give you back your mojo. Whatever your style or shape, we've found the most flattering sets to help you embrace your inner

Feeling fresh!

Spring has most definitely sprung, so get ready to boost your confidence with these gorgeous lingerie sets and heavenly new scents from Surf...

confidence, so you feel – and look – totally awesome. Inspired by the freshest, most feel-good fragrances around, you'll feel uplifted and invigorated – ready to tackle whatever life throws at you. Here's to feeling fabulous and owning your look, ladies...

White blossom

Inspired by Surf's 5 Herbal Extracts, these sets are perfect if you like your lingerie simple, understated and sweet. Try a delicate vest and matching briefs, or a cute bra-and-knickers combo to keep you feeling cool, calm and super-fresh from morning to night.



Wild flowers

If you've got an eye for all things bright and fun, you'll adore these sets, inspired by Wild Flowers & Morning Dew. From cute cami sets to '40s-inspired shapes and pretty prints – we're totally hooked. Are you?

Pretty in pink

Lacy, sheer and oh-so-feminine – this trend is definitely for the girliest of girls. You'll love these pretty sets – inspired by uplifting Lavender & Spring Jasmine. Embrace your inner flirt as well as this season's hottest shapes (hello, scalloped edges) and feel ready to conquer the world.



5 TOP TIPS FOR AN INSTANT CONFIDENCE BOOST

- 1** Slow down, lady! Speaking too fast can make you sound even more nervous than you actually are. Take a deep breath and slow your speech down – soon you'll feel as confident as you sound.
- 2** Think about your posture. Research says that when we improve our posture and stand or walk tall, it can reduce stress levels and actually make us feel better about ourselves.
- 3** Give compliments. Being able to compliment other people gives you a boost too, because it subtly suggests you're confident enough to congratulate others. Just remember to be sincere, OK?

- 4** Just get on with it. If you're terrified of doing something – whether it's saying yes to that date, or applying for a new job – just get out there and do it. It's never as bad as you think it might be (honest), and the rush you'll get from taking charge of your life will make you feel great, we promise!
- 5** Remember your wins. Celebrating past achievements is the quickest way to feel fabulous. When was the last time you were really proud of yourself? Remember, and celebrate it whenever you experience a wobble.

Lights, camera, **FASHION!**

*Fun, glamour and pampering with friends...
Welcome to the fabulous Cosmo Lingerie Show!*

Evenings don't get much more fun – or stylish – than 2015's first *Cosmopolitan* Lingerie Show, sponsored by Surf. London's glam Bloomsbury Ballroom looked and smelt amazing, partly thanks to Surf's male helpers – the 'Household Heroes' – who kept busy handing out roses and posing for pics. We enjoyed Żubrówka Vodka cocktails while being properly pampered courtesy of Mii makeup, Jessica Nails, The Braid Bar and our hair partner Karine Jackson.

In the run-up to the main event, *Cosmo* girls enjoyed the sultry sounds of singer Rebecca Ferguson, before Kristin Hallenga, the inspirational founder of breast-cancer-awareness charity CoppaFeel! (and former *Cosmopolitan* Ultimate Campaigner of the Year), reminded everyone just how important it is to check our boobs.

Then: show time. The room was buzzing with anticipation as the lights went down and our models, who came in all gorgeous shapes and sizes, took to the catwalk to show off the hottest new designs from our favourite lingerie brands: Very, Wonderbra, Freya, Bluebella and Coco de Mer. With lingerie inspired by six Surf fragrances, what better way to demonstrate how amazing we can all look and feel underneath our clothes? We can't wait for the next show!

TO SEE MORE LINGERIE LOOKS AND PICTURES FROM THE NIGHT, HEAD TO COSMOPOLITAN.CO.UK/LINGERIE

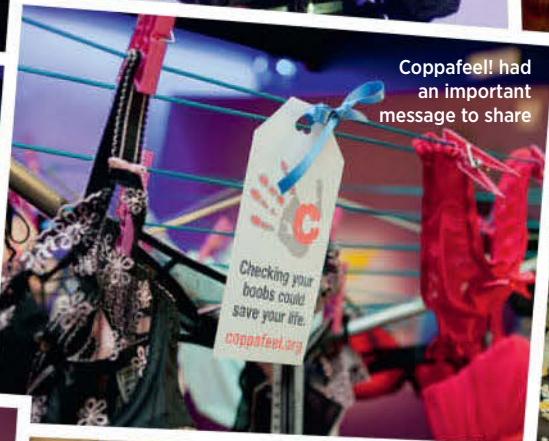


VERY

VERY

BLUEBELLA

BY CATRIONA HARVEY-JENNER. PHOTOGRAPHS CHARLOTTE MEDICOTT



Want to come to our next BIG FASHION ★ EVENT?★
Follow @HearstMagEvents on Twitter for all the details!



SUPERSKIN SOLUTIONS

Whatever matters to you when it comes to your skin,
The Body Shop has a tailor-made solution

What concerns you most when it comes to the health and state of your skin? When we asked you*, you answered in droves – and your comments confirmed what we'd already figured about *Cosmo* girls: that you come in many wonderful varieties, and so do your

skins. Fortunately, skincare today is better than it's ever been. There really is a solution for every niggle, whether it looks red, dull, flaky, blotchy, pore-y, oily or too lined. So let's look at your top six skin obsessions and sort them out. With the help of the vast array of problem-solving product ranges from The Body Shop®, results are guaranteed.

1 Signs of ageing

47% of you are unhappy to see signs of ageing, but we're impressed to find that you have the right ideas about how to stop them in their tracks. Almost three quarters of you have made lifestyle improvements, believing (and you're right!) that diet, sleep, stress and exercise have a profound effect on your skin. Sort these out and, say experts such as dermatologist Dr Sam Bunting, you can knock 10 years off the look of your skin. Yes, you read that right: 10 years.

Great skincare is obviously the other essential. Only 42% think 'using the right products' is something that affects the look of your skin, but as devoted skincare fans, we can assure you that good products suited to your skin type make a MASSIVE difference. Skin starts ageing from the age of 19 (gulp), so it's never too early to add a few age-busting products to your regime. Antioxidants and peptides (found in plant stem cells), widely recommended by dermatologists as essential weapons in your anti-ageing arsenal, are two ingredients to look out for.

You can't go wrong with The Body Shop's Vitamin C range. Boasting camu camu berries – 60 times richer in vitamin C than oranges – this collection of scrubs, moisturisers and instant glow boosters is on hand to give your skin its daily dose of the essential antioxidant vitamin. Start with **The Body Shop Vitamin C Microdermabrasion, £14**, twice a week; it's the perfect skin prep as it will allow active ingredients to penetrate properly. Follow with an anti-ageing serum – these are light enough to travel deep into the skin, where they help generate new cells.

The Body Shop Drops Of Youth™ Youth-Enhancing Concentrate, £24, is packed with plant stem cells that help your skin produce fresh, plump cells of its own, resulting in juicier, smoother-looking skin with fewer lines. It's so good, one is sold every 30 seconds!

Finally, seal in the goodness with **The Body Shop Vitamin C Skin Reviver, £15**. Worn alone or under makeup, it contains light-reflective particles for a youthful glow and gives skin a silky-smooth finish.



DID YOU KNOW?



Vitamin E Overnight Serum-In-Oil

is pure pleasure and performance for the skin; luxurious, lightweight oil with the power of a serum to replenish and nourish tired skin with hydration overnight. It's beauty sleep in a bottle!

DR TERRY, GLOBAL SKINCARE EXPERT



2 Dryness
49% of you complain about dry skin. A daily, moisture-rich routine is important, so please don't be one of the 55% among you who don't have one! Layering your moisturiser over a serum, for example, really boosts overall hydration. Try **The Body Shop Vitamin E Overnight Serum-In-Oil, £13** – a genius two-in-one product – under your moisturiser, or use it at night for a nourishing boost. Our bodies don't create vitamin E so The Body Shop has put a high concentration of wheatgerm oil (a great natural source) into this product.

It turns out that only very few of you use an oil, but it's the best way to replenish lost lipids, so well worth trying if you suffer from dry skin. Top it off with your usual night cream or **The Body Shop Drops Of Youth™ Bouncy Sleeping Mask, £22**. Developed to make the most of your skin's overnight repair cycle, it deeply hydrates just when your skin is most receptive. Its uniquely bouncy, memory-shape texture moulds itself like a second skin and is designed to be left on overnight. Result: a gorgeous glow when you wake up.



DID YOU KNOW?



Drops Of Youth™ Concentrate is a must-have for anyone concerned with fine lines as it gives a surge of hydration and helps enhance surface skin condition, leaving it looking smoother and fresher. I recommend it to all of my clients as not only is it suitable for any skin type or condition, but it can be incorporated into an existing skincare regime.

CAROLINE HIRONS, SKINCARE EXPERT AND BLOGGER

3 Lack of radiance

44% of you complain about dull, lacklustre facial skin, while over a third of you have an issue not with your face, but your body: it's too dry and therefore looks dull. With half a million internet searches taking place every month relating to glowing skin, the question is, how do you go about achieving that all-over radiance?

The answer lies with antioxidants. These protective compounds are found in most living organisms, where they protect cells from being broken down by destructive free radicals. But age and environmental factors such as pollution, stress, and sunlight deplete our natural stores, so we need to top them up – both through our diet and with the right skincare. The more your skin is infused with antioxidants (sourced from things such as plants, fruit and vegetables), the stronger it'll be and the more radiant it'll look.

The Body Shop incorporates some of nature's best antioxidants in its ranges. We've already mentioned the camu camu berry – a superior source of vitamin C. A huge dose can be found in the **NEW Vitamin C Glow Boosting Moisturiser, £16** (available from May, but you can bag a free sample in-store now**), which has the power to make you look like you've slept 12 hours AND gone for a jog around the park.

As for the body, another new range of products from The Body Shop is offering the definitive remedy for scaly skin. Fuji green tea, sourced from the pristine Mount Fuji region in Japan, is so high in antioxidants, the Japanese have been applying it to their skins for generations. And now it's the main ingredient in **The Body Shop Fuji Green Tea Body Scrub, £15**, and **Body Butter, £13** – your dynamic duo for glowing limbs. Scrub twice a week and apply the Butter twice a day, and we promise amazing results: deeply detoxified, soft skin with zero flakes.

DID YOU KNOW?

Vitamin C is a great nutrient for overall skin health, helping to keep it plump and moisturised. It aids skin-cell renewal and regeneration, revealing skin that feels smoother and looks more glowing. It's also a powerful antioxidant, fighting against free radicals.

DR TERRY, GLOBAL SKINCARE EXPERT



4 Puffy eyes

Puffy eyes are a pain: 43% of you think so. The skin here is the thinnest on your body, so any underlying problems show up here first. Allergies can cause bloat around the eyes, so it's worth finding out whether you suffer from any.

If you always wake up puffy, try these overnight tricks. First, add an extra pillow so your head is elevated when you sleep; this helps drain away stagnant moisture. Replace your cotton pillowcases with silk ones to minimise friction (any rubbing can cause puffiness). And if you use eye cream, don't apply it on your lids because it can overload the skin and cause bloat; dab it only on the bone surrounding the eye, from where just the right amount will seep into the lids. Alternatively, seek out a product with a metal rollerball applicator: delivering easy massage and instant coolness as well as active ingredients, you're looking at a triple puff-busting whammy – try **The Body Shop Drops Of Youth™ Eye Concentrate, £18.**



5 Sensitivity

35% of you feel a little sensitive. Your mantra should be 'less active and more soothing'. Keep your products as simple as possible: the fewer ingredients, the smaller the chance there's something in there that's going to irritate. There are some actives to look out for, however: proven botanical soothers such as camomile and aloe vera

will calm angry skin fast. Trust **The Body Shop Camomile Make-Up Removal Collection**, which includes **Camomile Cleansing Oil £10**, to melt away grime while treating sensitivity with essential camomile oil, and **The Body Shop Aloe Soothing Gel, £8.50**, to settle flare-ups. The Body Shop sources its premium, hand-cut and hand-pressed, 100% organic aloe vera juice from Guatemala, ensuring that the quality is superb and its soothing powers second to none.



There are some actives to look out for – proven botanical soothers such as camomile and aloe vera will soothe angry skin fast

6 Clogged pores

If there's one thing that annoys lots of you, it's clogged pores: a tidy 50% of you list it as a concern. Practically the same number describe their skin type as 'combination', so combating oiliness and congestion is a big deal.

Your essential first step is cleansing. You might think that's pretty obvious, but as almost half of you admit to not using a face cleanser every day, it's worth spelling out the basics: clear skin starts with cleansing twice daily, never with aggressive, alcohol-laden products but with mild cleansers featuring oil-dissolving powerhouses such as anti-bacterial tea tree oil. **The Body Shop Tea Tree Cool & Creamy Wash, £5**, is packed with it. Another essential in The Body Shop's blemish-busting range is its **Tea Tree Oil, £7** – a superior on-the-spot treatment (as well as a standby for any cuts and scrapes), it really should be in every bathroom cabinet.

Step two is gentle exfoliation. Using a face scrub three times a week after cleansing is the best way to unclog pores

and eke out blackheads. If you have acne (17% of you say you do), avoid scrubs; suck out impurities instead with **The Body Shop Seaweed Ionic Clay Mask, £13**. Used twice weekly, it does an ace job of purifying your face and controlling oil without leaving skin feeling dry.



Cosmo's Online Beauty Editor BRIDGET MARCH says:

"Using products compatible with your particular skin type is really important – you wouldn't use ones for straight hair on curls and the same approach should apply to your skincare. The Body Shop has ranges for all complexion concerns. Mine are dryness and premature ageing, which is why I love hydrating treats such as the **Drops Of Youth™ Bouncy Sleeping Mask**. I use it nightly and always notice how much plumper my skin looks by morning."

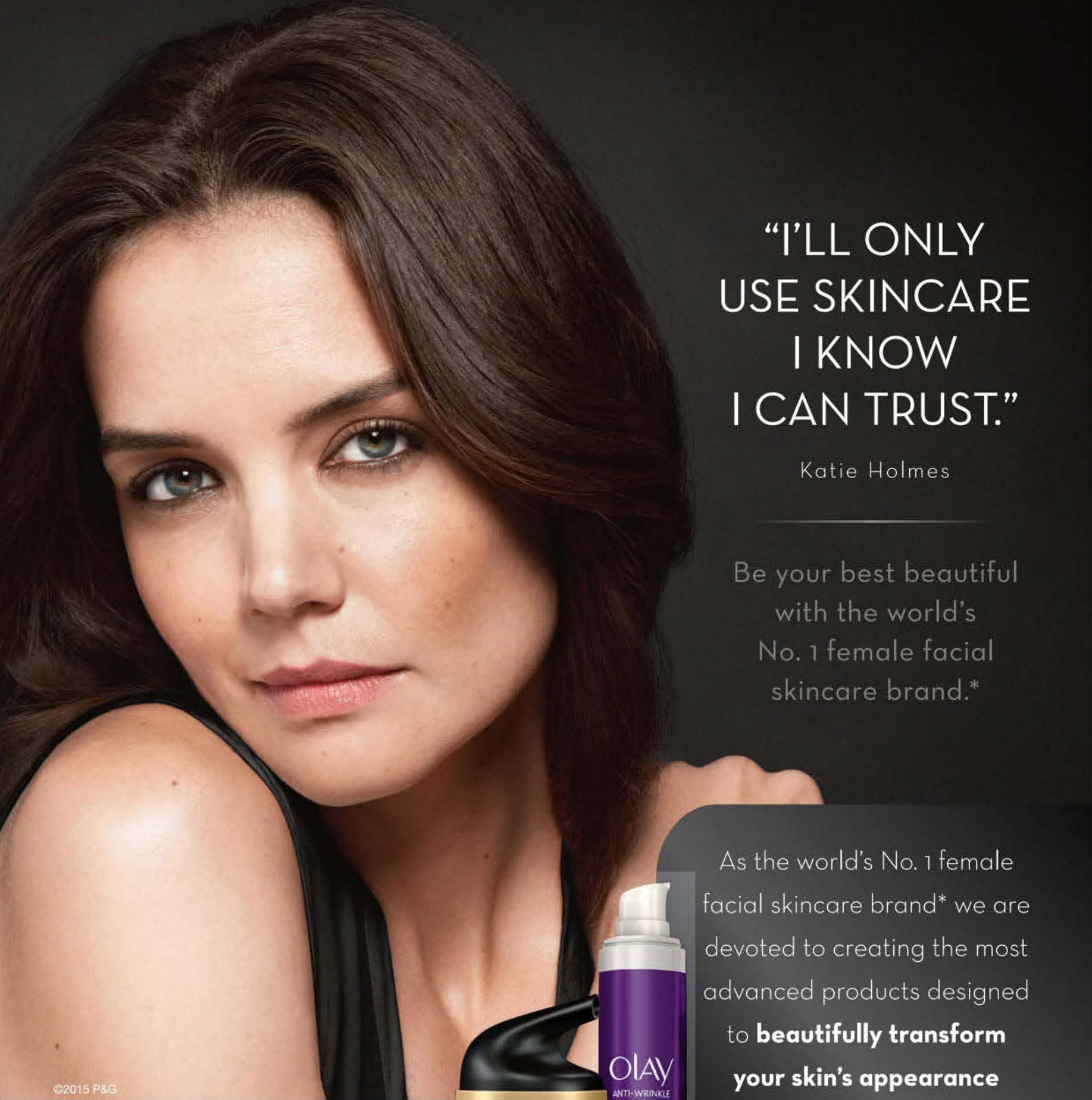


WIN TICKETS TO THE BODY SHOP EVENTS

Feeling inspired and want to find out more about a skincare regime, that's perfect for you? The Body Shop, in partnership with *Cosmo*, is holding a very exciting event next month. To see a calendar of events and for your chance to win tickets, visit Thebodyshop.com/beautytruths by 16 April.



Products available at Thebodyshop.com and at The Body Shop stores nationwide. Also available via The Body Shop At Home – to host a party, call 0800 092 9090 and quote *Cosmo*. To receive a free skincare consultation, drop into any The Body Shop store or visit Thebodyshop.com/skindiagnostic

A close-up portrait of actress Katie Holmes, looking directly at the camera with a soft expression. She has long, dark brown hair and is wearing a black, off-the-shoulder top.

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USE SKINCARE
I KNOW
I CAN TRUST."

Katie Holmes

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BEAUTY *secrets*

19 pages of look-fantastic
tricks we know work
(just don't tell
everyone...)



Instaglam

Top, Neon Rose.
Ring, Lola Rose



THE GLAMAZON PINK LIP

"A hot-pink glossy lip is sexy – as long as you don't team it with tons of bronzer and eyeshadow," says makeup artist Gucci Westman. "Stick to luminous, fresh skin and a simple glossy lid. Shape your lips (and create an anti-bleed barrier) with a fleshy rose lipliner slightly lighter than your natural shade. Apply lipstick, then dot gloss only in the middle of the top and bottom lips so it doesn't look too gloopy."

WE USED Revlon Ultra HD Lipstick in Sweet Pea, £21. Using a gel base instead of wax, it gives solid, bright colour in a single, weightless coat that fades to an even stain and won't end up in a rim around your mouth.



Lipstick is our secret weapon for instant hotness. Here's how to get the most out of every single tube...

*Words & beauty direction INGEBORG VAN LOTRINGEN
Fashion SAIREY STEMP
Photographs ELISABETH HOFF*



THE WEARABLE RED LIP

"Sketch along your lip edges with the side of a red pencil for a soft outline, then smudge some liner all over the lips," says makeup artist Rebecca Restrepo. "Think of liner and lipstick as nail polish and top coat: a two-step system that extends wear. Whack lipstick (matt is best as it won't bleed) on top, straight from the bullet; the liner ensures you don't have to be so precise. Then gently smooth over the edges with a finger for a diffused, stain-like effect."

WE USED Elizabeth Arden Beautiful Color Moisturizing Lipstick Matte in Bold Red, £21. It has a fade-resist complex, plus pigments suspended in a balmy film to keep it from feeling dry – unlike some matt lipsticks.

Shirt,
stylist's
own

Dress, Rebecca Taylor. Ring, Lola Rose

THE FIERCE FASHION LIP

"Extreme colours needn't be scary," says makeup artist Florrie White. "But you must create a smooth canvas, so scrub away dead skin with a cotton bud. Any unevenness will stand out, so create symmetry with a liner in the same shade as your lipstick. Then use a flat synthetic brush to evenly paint your lips. Deep blues and purples are chic, provided your foundation is flawless. Hot fluorescent orange flatters any skin tone, but balance it by warming up your skin with bronzer."

WE USED Clinique Pop Lip Colour And Primer in Grape Pop, £16. Its built-in primer conditions lips and helps keep the colour vibrant. >



*Shampoo and Conditioner vs. flat, limp hair.



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Jamie Aston
(Jamieaston.com)



THE PLUMPING NUDE LIP

"A nude lipstick will make lips look fuller," says makeup artist Shehla Shaikh. "Massage lips with clear balm, then neutralise your natural colour with a little concealer, two shades lighter than your base."

Trace your lips' very outer edges with nude liner appropriate for your colouring (the ideal shade for dark skin tones is one that matches the inside bottom lip), then fill lips out with it. Apply glossy lipstick in a similar nude to the centre of your lips. The most flattering nudes always have a little pink in them."

WE USED Lancôme Shine Lover Lipstick in Beige Béguin, £21, which has lip-plumping hyaluronic acid, a smoothing texture and oils to keep lips glossy. >

LIPS: TICK!

PAINT THE PERFECT POUT FOR YOUR SKIN TONE

Find out if your skin tone is 'warm' or 'cold' on p160

•PINK•



COOL LIGHT	WARM LIGHT	OLIVE	COOL DARK	WARM DARK
Urban Decay Sheer Revolution Lipstick in Sheer Ladyflower, £15.50	Bobbi Brown Sheer Lip Color in Pink Rose, £19.50	No7 Stay Perfect Lipstick in Raspberry Silk, £9.95	Aveda Nourish-Mint Smoothing Lip Colour in Magenta Berry, £13.50	Chanel Rouge Coco Lipstick in Ina, £26

•RED•



L'Oréal Paris Collection Exclusive Pure Reds Lipstick in Julianne's Pure Red, £6.99	Estée Lauder Pure Color Envy Shine Lipstick in Empowered, £25	Dior Rouge Dior Baume in Sweetheart, £26	Shiseido Veiled Rouge Lipstick in Mischief, £19.50	Dolce & Gabbana Dolce Matte Lipstick in Inferno, £26.50
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•FIERCE•



Barry M Lip Paint in Palest Lavender, £4.49	Bobbi Brown Sheer Stargazer Neon Lipstick in Orange, £3.50	Mac Lipstick in Heroine, £15.50	Lipstick Queen in Hello Sailor, £20	Illamasqua Lipstick in Apocalips, £18.50
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•NUDE•



Rimmel London Lasting Finish Lipstick By Kate in 03, £5.49	Burberry Kisses Lipstick in Rose Blush, £25	Charlotte Tilbury Matte Revolution Lipstick in Sexy Sienna, £23	Avon Ultra Colour Indulgence in Honey Flower, £8	Cargo Gel Lip Color in Brooklyn, £26
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CRACK THE COLOUR CODE

SHEHLA'S SKIN-TONE GUIDE

COOL LIGHT

Cherry-red or pink shades with a cool, blue base are best. Warm peaches also look pretty, but don't go too bright.

WARM LIGHT

Blue undertones can wash you out. Stick to shades with a pink or orange base to enhance the warmth of your skin.

OLIVE

You can carry off strong shades - try brick red or hot pink. Steer clear of blue undertones; they can make you look sallow.

COOL DARK

You need a lip statement! Go bold rather than sheer; chocolate and berry shades are great.

WARM DARK

Avoid muddy colours; bold and bright works brilliantly for you. Think brick red, fuchsia and dark wine.

Still not sure which shade is right for you? Pop a few on your fingertips (the skin here is closest to your lip colour) and hold them up to your face - you'll spot which is best,'

SAYS REBECCA ♦

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THE MAKE-UP OF MAKE-UP ARTISTS



KNOW
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When it comes to natural
makeup, there's no one-
kit-fits-all solution...

Je'vever wondered why barely-there makeup is trickier than a Saturday-night face? Shades that create a healthy glow on one person can look like neon gone wrong on another, and it's all down to the colour of your skin and its undertones. There are plenty of ways to pinpoint the latter, one being the jewellery test: if you suit gold jewellery it's likely you have a warm skin tone, while if it's silver, you're cool; suiting both suggests you're neutral. You might not be an exact match with one of our models, but you'll certainly fall into one – or a mix – of the categories they represent. So have a scan, find the tips relevant to you, and own your glow! ▶

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younger looking hair"



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■ BLACK

For our model Patrish, a mix of two foundations was required: one red-based and one yellow-based. If your skin is a deeper, cooler black than Patrish's, you'll want to lean towards a blue-based one (Mac and Nars are the best places to look for deeper shades). Makeup artist Caroline Sims neutralised the darker areas around Patrish's eyes and lips (common in black skin) by mixing a mustard-yellow and pure-orange Mac concealer (sounds a bit crazy, but give it a go). And here's the blush rule that everyone needs to remember: as skin tone darkens, blush should become purer – so pink is good, but pastel pink is blended with a lot of white and could look grey on darker skin. When it comes to varying lip pigments, work with what you've got by enhancing your darker lip line with a brown pencil and popping light-reflecting, clear gloss in the centre.

■ SOUTH-EAST ASIAN

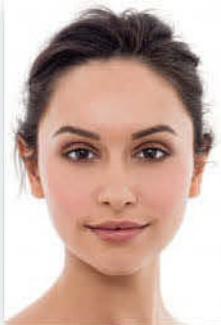
Our model Putri is Indonesian, and therefore more olive in appearance compared with someone from east Asia (say, China or Japan), who is likely to be a little cooler, with pink or blue undertones. If you're the latter, and feel your complexion can be sallow or dull,

try applying a lilac colour corrector before your base to brighten. Caroline used two shades of BB cream on Putri

– one with yellow undertones and another with red. "Blend the lighter shade down the centre of the face," she suggests. "Then mix the two together and blend out towards the darker edges."

She then dabbed a bright orange gel on Putri's cheeks, (see our darker-skin blush advice, above) and a pop of peach gloss in the centre of her lips. ▶

OLIVE OR MEDITERRANEAN



Olive skin often goes hand in hand with darker under-eye circles. Create your own hero concealer by applying a peach cover-up (to neutralise any bluish-brown discolouration), followed by a pink one to brighten.

Here's the good news: this warmer skin tone can hold almost any colour, so try a healthy pop of raspberry on the cheeks. Jelly and cream textures sit more naturally on the skin than powder, so don't be put off if a shade looks a bit bright before you apply it. Create contrast by applying a soft gold highlighter along the highest points of the face (cheekbones, brow bones and along the nose), and if your eyes are very dark like our model Abigail's, a red-toned brown eyeshadow will help pull out any lighter flecks within the iris.

WHITE



Fair skin often has a combination of yellow and pink undertones, so mixing two foundations could find you your match. "Be generous with the pink, though," advises makeup artist Scarlett Burton. "You don't

want your skin looking orange." Scarlett opted for a sheer formula to allow model Abigail's freckles to peek through, and warmed her cheeks with a peachy-pink blush. "Soft pinks lift a pale complexion instantly," she explains. "And the hint of peach sits well on Abigail's sun-kissed freckles." If there's nothing sun-kissed about your skin (think Kristen Stewart), go for a cooler, blue-toned pink. Abigail's lips were filled with a pinky-beige liner (closest to her natural lip colour), and her eyes enhanced with a soft pink shimmer.

INDIAN OR MIDDLE EASTERN



Our model Simone's golden-yellow and red undertones called for a peach concealer to brighten dark under-eyes and neutralise the pigmentation common in Indian skin. Spend some time at a makeup

counter finding the right one for you - Bobbi Brown offers a range of peach concealers. Caroline went for a khaki eyeshadow on Simone's eyelids (a flattering alternative to black or brown) and a gold lipgloss. As mentioned, some pinks can take on a grey appearance on darker skin, so Caroline opted for a terracotta blush with red undertones to create a flush that didn't look out of place. "If you want to play with pinks, just remember to opt for the purest colour - fuchsia rather than baby, for example," she says.

BLACK

Nars All Day Luminous Weightless Foundation in Benares, £32

Kevyn Aucoin The Creamy Glow in Patrice, £20

Mac Studio Finish Conceal And Correct Duo in Pure Orange/Ochre, £23

SOUTH-EAST ASIAN

L'Oréal Paris Nude Magique CC Anti-Dullness Cream, £9.99

Illamasqua Gel Colour in Charm, £22

Clinique Long Last Glosswear in Honey Bunch, £16

OLIVE/MEDITERRANEAN

Butter London Cheeky Tinted Highlighter in Pence, £20

Becca Beach Tint in Dragonfruit, £20

Fashion Fair Eyeshadow in Safari Brown, £11.50

WHITE

Charlotte Tilbury Lip Cheat in Pink Venus, £16

Kiko Mosaic Blush in Inspiration Rose Coral, £11.90

Essence Effect Eyeshadow in Brazil's Sunset, £3

INDIAN/ MIDDLE EASTERN

Zoeva Luxe Color Blush in Burning Up, £6.50

Bobbi Brown Corrector in Peach, £19

Bobbi Brown Corrector in Peach, £19

Burberry Eye Colour Silk in Khaki Green, £23

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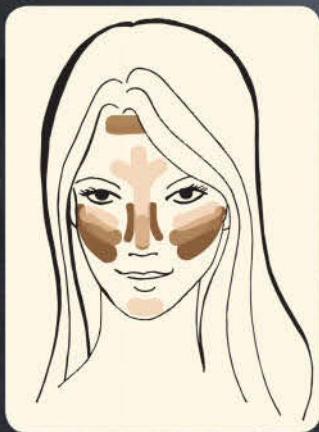
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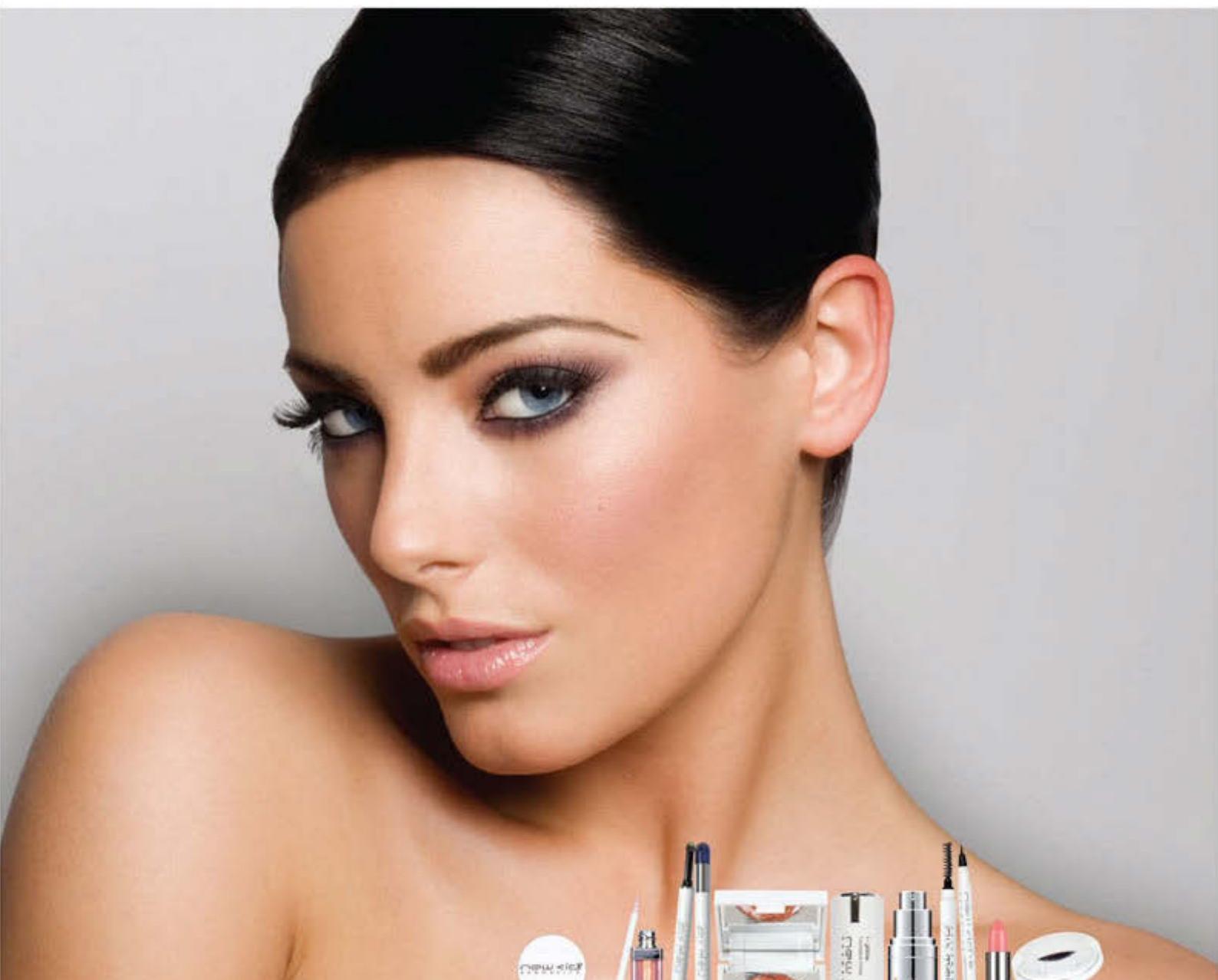
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The Award Winning British Cosmetics Range which features clever colours wrapped up in innovative packaging

Steinnovation!

These five new products are so clever they (probably) come with a Master's degree. But what exactly do they do?

I Verso Super Facial Oil, £140

MADE FOR Ageing skin.

WHAT IS IT? A retinol facial oil that's gentle and hydrating.
HOW DOES IT WORK?

"Vitamin A can dry out or irritate skin, so we created a hydrating, anti-inflammatory blend of oils to side-step this," says Verso founder Lars Fredriksson. "It's the world's first retinol oil and first non-prescription, high-dose vitamin-A derivative you can safely use during the day."

WE SAY An anti-ageing treat; we love its glow-giving texture.

**2 Melvita
Apicosma
Soothing
Cream, £35**

MADE FOR Sensitive skin.

WHAT IS IT? The first flash-sterilised, 100% preservative-free cream

HOW DOES IT WORK?

"Flash sterilisation kills bacteria, but the active ingredients stay intact for the highest level of effectiveness for sensitive skin without irritation," says

Melvita's Didier Thevenin.
WE SAY This visibly calms
the skin.

3 Shiseido Ibuki Multi Solution Gel, £30

MADE FOR Stressed-out skin

WHAT IS IT? A quick fix (AKA a handbag essential).

HOW DOES IT WORK?
"This gel targets the blemishes, visible pores and roughness that happen when skin is stressed," says Shiseido UK's Rebecca Chantrell. "The gel-like texture adheres to problem areas (it works over makeup too), and it's loaded with ingredients that quickly repair damaged skin."

WE SAY Finally, a multi-use rescue balm without the greasy texture!



4 La Roche-Posay Serozinc, £8.50

MADE FOR Acne-prone skin.
WHAT IS IT? A spray-on toner
that purifies and freshens oily,
blemish-prone complexions.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

"Serozinc has a simple formula: the only ingredients are water, zinc sulphate and sodium chloride, so it has great antibacterial properties and is kind to angry skin," says La Roche-Posay scientific director Sophie Seite. "It purifies without dehydrating and is good for tightening pores, fighting grease and stopping shine."

WE SAY This is a fab perk-up for oily skin. We spritz it throughout the day to treat breakouts and mattify shine.

5 Nude
ProGenius
Milk, £62

MADE FOR Dry skin

WHAT IS IT? A milky serum full of nourishing omega oils.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

"This serum delivers a concentrated dose of nutrition and hydration in a formula that packs superfood extracts and all five omegas, without any oiliness," says Nude Skincare research and development manager Anita Tong.

WE SAY This milk feels super-light, it absorbs easily and really nourishes skin.

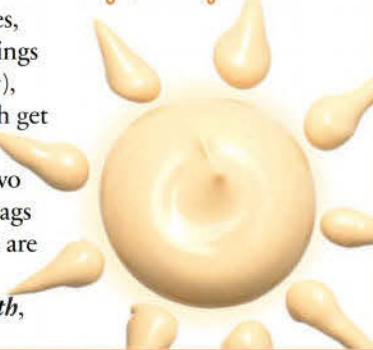
THE BODY FIXES we know work...

Team Cosmo share our summer beauty prep secrets

In bikini season, you'll see countless treatments that claim to 'zap' stubborn fat pockets, but the ONLY one that works – bar surgery – is *CoolSculpting* (from £800, Coolsculpting.co.uk). Your love handles, pot belly or bingo wings are frozen (painlessly), killing fat cells, which get flushed out by your lymph system over two months. The saddlebags I sported for 20 years are gone thanks to two rounds of *CoolSmooth*,

which uses a large paddle designed for the outer thighs (at Cosmetic skinclinic.com). One caveat: it can't fix slack skin, so while my fat is gone, my cellulite isn't.

Inge, Beauty Director



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I love *Champneys Mediterranean Bliss Shimmering Body Oil*, £10. You only need a tiny bit to give skin a glowy sun-kissed look. The colour isn't too dark, so it's natural-looking and there's no fear of streaking or smudging like you get with fake tan. Think a more subtle tan enhancer than colour changer.

Claire, Senior Digital Writer



My shoulders only ever drop when I'm sat on a warm beach, so it's no surprise I suffer from seriously stubborn knots the other 351 days of the year. Then I discovered deep-tissue massage at a Thai spa near work and had one of the best (and most painful) massages ever. It's not for everyone – ie, people who don't enjoy having an elbow in their back and hearing the crunch of their own muscles – but I always leave feeling looser, happier and buzzing with beach energy. *Cassie, Beauty Writer*

Think nothing works for stretch marks? Let me introduce you to *Clarins Tonic Body Treatment Oil*, £38. I've used it during both my pregnancies and while I was MASSIVE both times, I emerged stretch-mark free. Considering I also got them during my puberty growth spurt, I must be prone, so I reckon this is pretty amazing stuff. *Kate, Beauty Editor*





My hubby will never understand it, but for me the confidence boost that a slick of self tan can deliver is priceless. **Skinny Tan Gradual Tanner**, £19.99, feels and smells just like a tropical body butter and its natural

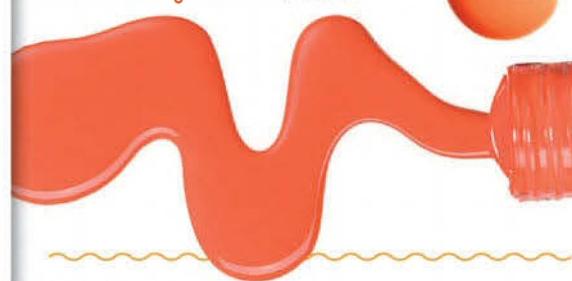
tanning agents develop subtly so it's practically foolproof. I layer it up for a hint of tint that makes all the difference to my yellow-toned skin. Yes, it's got an awful



name, but despite that, it's the best gradual faker I've found. **Bridget, Online Beauty Editor**

I'm the kind of girl who won't spend a lot of money on treatments that wear off (I have my hair cut once a year, FFS), but I decided to treat myself to a gel manicure for my birthday and now I'm hooked. On holiday, it's so nice not to have to deal with removing and reapplying nail varnish, hiding chipped nails or exposing your yellowing talons to the world. It's expensive, yes (from around £35), but it's one of those treats that makes you feel fantastic.

Rosie, Acting Content Director



The Universal Contour Wrap (£75, Universalcontourwrap.com/uk) has been

around forever, but it's still one of my trusty faves. You get wrapped up, mummy-style, in layers of bandages soaked in a mineral-clay solution, which compress your fatty tissues and tone your skin. It's not exactly fun, but you can't argue with the results. If you don't lose *at least* six inches all over, and keep them off for 30 days, you get your money back. OK, so the miracle doesn't last forever, but it's perfect for upcoming big events, holidays, etc.

I had one before my wedding and it was the one reason I had the guts to wear my slinky dress without Spanx! **Kate, Beauty Editor** ♦

COSMO PROMOTION



Colour me PRETTY

Always after just the right nail polish to suit your mood? Look no further than Rimmel London!



It sounds too good to be true, but with 60 different shades from £2.99 each (RRP), the new 60 Seconds Super Shine Nail Polish range from Rimmel London really has you covered. From brights, classics, metallics, pastels and pearls to 12 exciting new shades by Rita Ora, you're bound to find a shade to suit your every mood and outfit. Plus, the new formula gives you a shiny, glossy finish with just one stroke, thanks to the handy brush applicator – and its super-fast drying time means you'll be ready to go

in no time. What are you waiting for?

60 DAYS OF COLOUR WITH RIMMEL LONDON

Head to Cosmopolitan.co.uk/rimmel to discover a celebration of all things bright and beautiful. With fantastic fashion tips and brilliant beauty advice from the *Cosmo* team, we've got everything you need to inject a little colour into your day!

Rimmellondon.com



14 BEAUTY TRUTHS YOU NEED TO KNOW



Seventeen years in the beauty trenches has taught Beauty Director **Inge van Lotringen** a thing or two about which products *really* deliver



1 EXERCISE IS THE BEST BEAUTY TREATMENT

My skin secret? Exercise. You don't see many athletes with sallow, congested or slack skin, do you? A regular sweatfest pushes the toxins out and gets your blood racing, delivering vitamins, minerals, oxygen and other essentials for alive, strong, healthy skin. Exercise is also an ace reliever of stress (among the main causes of breakouts and ageing). A recent study found that just three hours of moderate activity a week for three months made older test subjects' skin look more than 20 years younger. So for the love of your face, get moving!

2 KNOW WHAT TO AVOID

The good news is beauty ingredients are so tightly regulated, they are totally safe as long as you follow the instructions, but that doesn't mean there aren't some I always try to avoid. There are more than 100 safe sulfates (detergents), but the foamiest ones (sodium lauryl sulfate and sodium laureth sulfate) strip skin and scalp of its moisture barrier – a no-no for me. Another very cheap, popular ingredient, mineral oil (look for petrolatum or paraffinum liquidum) is great at sealing in moisture, but can block pores and cause zits, so it's not great in face products, especially if you have oily skin.

3 SKINCARE LAYERING WORKS

No single skincare product 'does it all', no matter what it claims. Remember, for active ingredients to penetrate, the formula has to be very light, and for a product to seal in moisture, you need it to remain near the skin's surface. So use a minimum of two products: a serum to tackle a skin concern, and a cream (with SPF) to moisturise. As for cleansing, I like to double-cleanse with one oil-based and one water-based product, to really eke out grime. It means you apply about half as much of each product as you would if you used only one, so you're not actually spending extra cash – bonus.

4. THERE'S NO FREE RIDE

Beauty short cuts are great, but you'll pay the price. If you don't take regular breaks, things such as gel nails and hair and lash extensions will eventually leave your natural assets weakened and, in some cases, permanently damaged – especially if their upkeep isn't done by qualified (and damned expensive) professionals. Much the same goes for

instant-satisfaction face fixes such as chemical peels and fillers. As a general rule, the more immediate and dramatic the transformation, the more it'll bite you in the backside in the long run. So think of them as treats, not substitutes for a great beauty and health regime that'll help your hair, skin and nails be as strong and luscious as they can be.



7. CHEAP MAKEUP ROCKS

If the sight of a Chanel lipstick or the weight of a Tom Ford compact makes your heart flutter, good for you. But in terms of quality, there is very little need to spend a fortune on makeup nowadays. Unbelievable textures, indelible formulas and massive colour palettes are at your disposal at high-street prices everywhere. Look to Revlon for lipstick, Max Factor for mascara, Rimmel for nail polish and concealer, Lola at M&S for eyeshadow, Bourjois for blusher, Zoëva for brushes, The Body Shop for bronzer... I could go on.

5 MIX & MATCH

Most brands have a few exceptional products, but there's no reason to stick to one single skincare range unless you totally love everything it does. So pick 'n' mix as you like. Just watch out with powerful actives such as retinol, vitamin C and alpha-hydroxy acids. Layering these can cause irritation, or they may cancel each other out, so best get advice. (By reading more of *Cosmo*, of course.)

6 YOU NEED CONDITIONER

Unless you're Timotei girl running around barefoot in a meadow, your hair constantly suffers – from dyeing, heat styling, alcohol-laden products, extensions... Conditioner is the one thing that'll let you inflict all this abuse and get away with it, as it remoisturises, heals and protects. It will *not* make your hair go limp, even if it's fine like mine, as long as you pick one for your hair type, apply it to your lengths and ends only, and rinse well for a minute or two. Just do it.

8 THE FRENCH KNOW GREAT SKINCARE

La Roche-Posay, Bioderma, Vichy, Avène – basically, if it comes in a plain white bottle with an unpronounceable name, it's a safe option. The French *pharmacie* tradition means they're masters at making highly effective skincare with very few irritating ingredients, at prices we can afford. The compromise? It hardly feels like a luxurious treat, but if it works for your skin, who cares?

9 YOU CAN'T HAVE IT ALL

Especially with pigment spots. They have several causes (ageing, hormones, etc), but their main component is melanin, which is activated by UV light. So you can spend a fortune on pigment-zapping lasers and cosmetics, but if you don't practise scrupulous sun avoidance (SPF50 every day and never ever sunbathe), you may as well set fire to a pile of £50 notes. ▶

10. BOTOX IS NOT THE ANSWER

When did twenty-somethings start examining their foreheads through a magnifying glass and freaking out about microscopic lines? We're not meant to look like eggs, but we're so overfed on a diet of Botoxed celeb faces, we've lost sight of what is normal – and beautiful. Yes, botulinum toxin works: it makes wrinkles (which people in their twenties don't have) disappear. What, in time, *also* disappears is your glow and facial tone, because oxygen and nutrients no longer flow freely around paralysed muscles. So the sooner you give in to these injections, the more quickly you age. The pinnacle of a woman's beauty is deemed to be at 36, so why interfere with your natural hotness when you haven't even reached those heights? Think great skincare; think vibrant skin; think Helen Mirren – and think *again* before considering the needle.

11 CAN'T PRONOUNCE IT? USE IT

You know that rule of thumb for avoiding overprocessed foods: if you can't pronounce the ingredients, don't buy it? That doesn't apply to skincare. Salicylic acid is a genius tree-bark extract that calms and fights spots. Hyaluronic acid is a superior hydrator. Retinyl palmitate is a form of anti-ageing vitamin A, and L-ascorbic acid is collagen-boosting vitamin C. Plus, botanicals are usually listed by their Latin names. A long ingredient list isn't a bad thing for skin either – unless yours is sensitive, in which case fewer ingredients means fewer potential irritants.

12 SCENT LOVE IS BLIND

You may adore a bottle, a brand, or a celebrity associated with a perfume, but none of those can make you love the scent itself. Finding the right fragrance is a lot like finding true love: it just happens; you can't *make* it happen. That doesn't mean you can't sniff around for it everywhere and try loads on for size. Just do it with your eyes closed, and trust only your feelings.

Jack
Eau de
Parfum,
£95



13. BLUSHER IS TRANSFORMATIVE

Many people are scared of blusher, but it's one of the easiest ways to instantly transform your face. Not only does it make you look much fresher, it brings out your cheekbones without the need for complicated contouring. A tiny dab (cream blush is easiest to master) blended on the apples of your cheeks is all you need – dusky pink and peach suit everyone, so start there. Team with mascara, and concealer where you need it, and you might find yourself looking so fresh-faced you'll skip your base.

Maybelline
Dream Touch
Blush in Berry,
£6.49

Bourjois Little Round
Pot Blush in Rose Coup
de Foudre, £7.99



14. GADGETS NEVER GET USED

Based on the lasers and other advanced technology found in skin clinics, there's ample evidence that consistent use of the latest zit/wrinkle/hair/whatever-zapping electronic gadgets has real benefits. I don't contest their promises, but when it comes to at-home versions the truth is that after an enthusiastic first

burst of faithful use, they tend to end up gathering dust. Committing to regular self-treatment, with few instant results and no pamper factor, is harder than it seems – and I do speak from experience. Cleansing brushes and epilators are the possible exception, but beyond those, consider your investment carefully. ♦

Mane attraction

Prepare to get excited: Tesco's impressive new styling range is here to change your life...

Bye-bye, bad-hair days – THX Total Hair Experts has you covered whatever the season and whatever look you fancy. Its *Spiralicious Bubble Wand*, £25, is the only tool you need to create those on-trend, naturally chic yet 'undone' curls all the celebs are rocking. The easy-to-use 'bubble' design means you can either create tousled waves or defined spirals, depending how you wrap your hair around it. Team with *THX Total Hair Experts Pump Up The Volume Hairdryer*, £30, to help you create the biggest bounciest waves and curls ever. We promise!

COSMO STYLE OFF MEET THE JUDGES



*Inge van Lotringen,
Cosmo Beauty
Director*

Having worked in the industry for 17 years, Inge is the go-to beauty expert



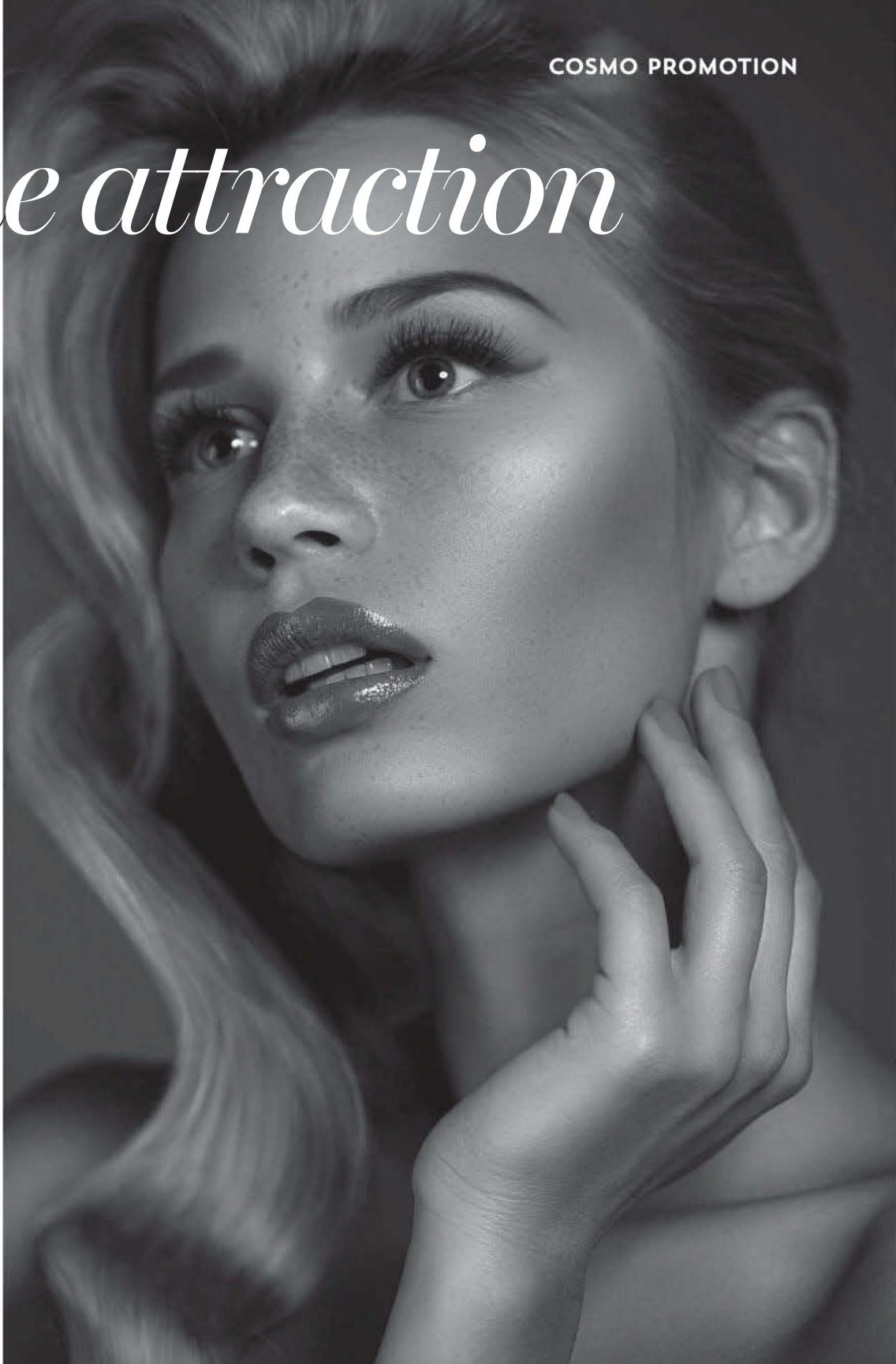
*Nicky Clarke,
celebrity hairdresser*

Salon-owner and creator of an award-winning product range, Nicky knows a thing or two about hair



*ReeRee Rockette,
alternative style
blogger*

ReeRee not only owns a rockabilly salon, but she's also a columnist for tattoo mag *Things & Ink*



Meet the winners next issue!

Last month we told you about Cosmo's Style Off – your chance to show us your styling skills and win a massive prize. Well, the competition happened and our judges chose the lucky winners. If you fancy seeing what they created and how things panned out on the big day, head to Cosmopolitan.co.uk/Styleoff to watch the videos. Oh, and don't forget to check back in next month's issue to see the two winning looks. They were recreated specially for a shoot – you'd be mad to miss it!



COSMOPOLITAN
StyleOff

THX
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE TOTAL HAIR EXPERTS



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*Nielsen GB ScanTrack Total Coverage 52 w/e 31 Jan 2015.

THE Beauty LAB



Environ Intensive Revival Mask, £49.95

A mask made up of different acids sounds scary, but this won't make your skin peel; instead it'll boost moisture to give brighter, plumper and more even skin after just one go. *Inge, Beauty Director*



Botanifique Magnifique Facial Mask, £60

A slightly messy but totally unique pampering experience - you lift this iron-particle-packed mask from your face using a magnet that comes in the pot! Skin impurities are drawn out with it, leaving a hydrating serum to rub in. Pricey, but I had some fun and loved the glow it left behind. *Cassie, Beauty Writer*



The Body Shop Drops Of Youth Bouncy Sleeping Mask, £22

This cream-gel mask, packed with skin-cell-renewing properties, boosts elasticity. It felt a bit sticky at bedtime, but in the morning my skin was ultra-soft. *Bridget, Online Beauty Editor*



Quick Fix Facials Mega Moisture Gel Mask, £4.99

Packed with moisture magnets, this left my skin plump and juicy after five minutes. Great value; just watch out if you're sensitive to strong fragrance; there's a lot of it in here. *Inge*



Three's A TREND

Right now it's all about... sweet-as-pudding fragrances



Laura Mercier Tarte au Citron Eau Gourmande EDT, £42.50

This zesty lemon scent not only satisfies sweet cravings, it also channels some seriously uplifting spring vibes. Don't worry about it being too zingy either - it's got a deliciously comforting vanilla base that smooths everything out.



DKNY Delicious Delights Cool Swirl EDT, £37

If it's a guilt-free, grown-up treat you're after, then this delicate mix of blackcurrant, coconut water and pistachio sorbet is worth trying. It's feminine but not cloyingly sweet, so if you're looking for a fragrance to make a subtle impact, then this could be the one.



Nina Ricci Les Délices de Nina EDT, £41

The juice inside this pretty fluoro pink-and-gold bottle screams pick 'n' mix. The main note is strawberry candy, but if that's not sweet enough for you there are hints of raspberry, tangerine and caramel too. One sniff will give you a real-life candy crush...



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Gently DOES IT

Looking for a holy-grail product you can count on to make cleansing quick and easy without being harsh? Call off the search – we have the answer...

Simple, the sensitive-skin expert, has created its most advanced yet gentle cleanser, which will give you instantly hydrated skin. Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? But it's not: crafted by specialists in skincare, Simple Kind To Skin Micellar Cleansing Water, RRP £4.49, is the next generation in cleansing for the UK's No.1 facial-skincare brand*.

Simple Kind To Skin Micellar Water contains absolutely no nasties, and as you'd expect from the expert in the field, it's kind to even the most sensitive skin. The formula promises to do nothing except cleanse and care for your skin – that's why it's loved by all skin types.

Loaded with vitamin B3 (known to restore,

soften and smooth skin – and especially great for people who suffer with dryness) and vitamin C (a powerful antioxidant that protects cells and keeps them healthy, and is key for great-looking skin), Simple Micellar Water will condition your skin and effectively remove makeup and other daily impurities.

The formula promises to do nothing but cleanse and care for your skin'

Everyone knows how important cleansing is when it comes to maintaining healthy-looking and healthy-feeling skin, so this product is a real hero because it can be used at any time, in any place, with absolutely no rinsing required. What's not to love? All you need is a couple of cotton pads, and that's it! It's designed to give you an amazing cleanse, while making sure your skin is instantly hydrated. Plus, we promise that it'll help prevent that feeling of tight skin; instead it'll feel cleansed, refreshed and, most importantly, able to breathe.



3 STEPS TO HAPPY SKIN

1 Getting cleansed, happy and instantly hydrated skin has never been so easy. Apply a generous amount of Simple Micellar Water to a clean cotton-wool pad.

2 Next, gently wipe the soaked cotton pad all around your face, using light, circular motions. There's absolutely no need to rub it into the skin, so be kind to it!

3 Finally, close your eyes and gently wipe around them with the cotton pad, trying to avoid getting the water into your eyes. Then you're done – no need to rinse it off.

Micellar FAQs

Cleansing your face with Micellar Cleansing Water is as easy as ABC – and here's the proof:



How much should I use?

We recommend starting with one cotton pad and applying a generous amount. Some Simple Micellar Water lovers use one pad for each side of their face; others use several for a thorough cleanse.

Is it OK to use if I have sensitive skin?

Simple Micellar Water is designed for the most sensitive skin, so don't worry! Only the purest skin-loving ingredients are used, so not only is it super-effective, it's suitable for all skin types.

How does the product fit into my daily routine?

You can use Simple Micellar Water as your daily cleanser – the only difference is you don't need to rinse it off. After using, continue with your normal skincare regime.

How often can I use it?

Whenever you fancy! It's great in the morning to refresh and wake up your skin, and in the evenings it's the perfect makeup remover and cleanser.



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£500

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AND TELL
US WHAT
YOU THINK
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No7 Pop & Glow Duo, £9.95, is an easy-to-apply blush and highlighter combo in a handy, twistable stick!

Another first, **Clinique Turnaround Revitalizing Treatment Oil, £30**, is the only face oil we know of with salicylic acid, which gently exfoliates skin.

If you've never been a neon-on-your-nails kind of girl, you'll love the slightly 'off' colours in the **Orly Sugar High Collection, £10.50 each**.

Topshop Lip Ombre, £9, helps you create a fashionly two-tone lip by dabbing the darker shade all over and the paler one in the middle. Tasty.

HOT right now

The latest products on the Cosmo beauty team's radar

Philosophy Renewed Hope In A Jar, £35.50, is a moisturiser for *that* moment in your early thirties when skin begins to change. It promises a dewy feel and an all-day glow.

When a cult scent gets a makeover, we get a bit giddy. **Thierry Mugler Alien Eau Extraordinaire Gold Shimmer, £50**, is no exception.

A primer that smooths instantly and over time, without silicones (which stop active ingredients working). Fab! **L'Occitane Skin Perfector, £38**.

Proving she can do no wrong, **Stella McCartney Stella EDT, from £42**, is a greener, fresher version of the dusky rose original and smells as good as it looks.

Magical **YSL Touche Eclat Blur Perfector, £31.50**, seems to make pores, shine and wrinkles melt away before your eyes. Classy and clever.

Pick from a palette of scent notes, and **Jo Loves** will blend two into your perfect **Shot Candle, £75**. Our Fig Tree and Mango one is divine.



Ready for a new smile?

For more opportunities to get pregnant naturally try Clearblue Digital Ovulation Test with Dual Hormone Indicator. It's **the only test** that tracks 2 key fertility hormones to typically identify **4 or more fertile days¹**.



www.clearblue.com

Clearblue Digital Ovulation Test with Dual Hormone Indicator identifies more opportunities than other ovulation tests.¹ In a study of 87 women, 4 or more fertile days were identified in 80% of cycles using actual cycle length. Read instructions before use. ©2014 SPD Swiss Precision Diagnostics GmbH. All rights reserved.

Sex etc.



RISKY BUSINESS

COWGIRL IS THE MOST DANGEROUS POSITION FOR A MAN - IT'S RESPONSIBLE FOR 50% OF ALL PENIS FRACTURES. THE SAFEST IS MISSIONARY, WHICH CAUSES JUST 21%. THAT STILL SOUNDS LIKE A LOT...

1/10 PEOPLE CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE A 'VERY GOOD LOVER'

Care to put your money where your mouth is, folks?

"I THINK THE PERFECTION OF LOVE IS THAT IT'S NOT PERFECT."

Taylor Swift's word is gospel



BY KATE RUSSELL, PHOTOGRAPHS GETTY IMAGES, REX FEATURES, CORBIS IMAGES, ISTOCK, TAMARA SCHLESINGER



Couples with a TV in the bedroom have twice as much sex as those without. The Newsnight effect, perhaps?

MONEY MONEY MONEY

Just 1% of people say it's the most important thing in a relationship. Glad we've got our priorities sorted...

Sweet, sweet love

Tasting something sugary on a date makes you more likely to want to see the guy (or girl) again. So get the sharing spoons out!



The oldest sex toy ever found is a 28,000-year-old siltstone dildo from Germany. Scientists have even found Ancient-Egyptian ones made from... yup, camel dung. We'll stick with our plastic and silicone gadgets, ta.



54% OF MEN

find sexual infidelity the most painful form. But for 65% OF WOMEN emotional affairs are worse.

SIZE MATTERS

79% of British men are happy with their penis size, rising (pun intended) to 88% in Scotland alone.

STOP THE CLOCK

Studies say it takes an average of 11 weeks to get over a split. Unless you've been married - then it's 18 months.

When he touches me like *that* I used to love it – but now it's just irritating. What's different?

Doesn't she fancy me anymore?

I'm still madly in love with him and I *want* to want sex, but I just... don't



Where
did my
libido go?

HOW NORMAL IS YOUR **SEX** **DRIVE?**

*How often should we want sex?
There is no simple answer, says
sexpert Dr Emily Nagoski...*

The questions you've just read on the previous page are only a handful of the ones I get asked about sex – some of which you might have found yourself asking too. As a sex educator and the author of new book, *Come As You Are*, about the science behind sex, pretty much every question I've ever been asked boils down to the same thing: 'Am I normal?' And the answer is always the same: 'Yes, you're normal. He's normal. And that's normal too.'

In fact, over the past 20 years I've become convinced that the single biggest issue causing desire problems is that women get too focused on whether they want sex, and forget to pay attention to whether they actually *like* the sex they're having. So how can you shift your focus and maximise your sexual potential? It's actually a lot easier than you might think...

Why sex is *not* a drive

First things first: do you think you've got a sex drive? The idea that we each have a level of desire ranging from 'nu-uh' to 'gimme more' is pretty basic. You might assume that apart from natural fluctuations depending on the newness of a relationship, your general level of interest in sex is fairly static.

But what if I told you that the science behind your sex drive can more accurately be described as a dual-control model of sexual response – and that it's really not a 'drive' at all?

The dual-control model says that the sexual-response mechanism in your brain has two parts. First, there's an accelerator that responds to all the sexually relevant things in your environment and sends a signal that says, 'turn on!' (this could be his smell or touch, or something unique to you, such as the feel of denim).

Second, there are your sexual brakes, which respond to all the very good reasons not to want sex right now – from unwanted pregnancy or STIs, to relationship and trust issues, stress or body-image worries. Difficulties

with desire (or having a 'low sex drive') are rarely about getting too little stimulation to your accelerator (which explains why all those *Fifty Shades*-inspired toys may not be doing the trick for you). Instead, lack of desire is more often about too much 'brake'. The good news? You can absolutely do something about it:

HOW SENSITIVE ARE YOUR BRAKES?

Two things could be turning you off: super-sensitive brakes, or too many things hitting them at once.

Consider these statements:

- Unless things are 'just right', it's difficult for me to be aroused.
- When I'm aroused, the slightest thing can turn me off.
- If I'm worried about taking too long to become aroused or to orgasm, it interferes with my arousal.
- Sometimes I feel so shy or self-conscious during sex that I can't become fully aroused.

The truer these statements are for you, the more likely it is you've got sensitive brakes. If there are things that shut you down while getting it on, or elements that have to be 'just right' before fun times get started, it's your brakes. And it's normal.

HOW SENSITIVE IS YOUR ACCELERATOR?

Maybe you take a while to get going, or can be turned on at the flick of a switch (so to speak). Consider these statements:

- Often, just how someone smells can be a turn-on.
- When I think about someone I find sexually attractive, I'm easily aroused.
- Having sex in a different setting is a real turn-on for me.
- I get very aroused when someone wants me sexually.

The truer these statements are for you, the more likely it is that you've got an accelerator that takes you from zero to 60 super-quickly. But if you disagree with them, you might find it takes you a while to get going, especially if your brakes are sensitive. And this is normal too.

What makes a great ride?

Once you have a sense of how sensitive your brakes and accelerator are, think about what hits each of them. Remember great sex you've had in the past (oh, go on...) – and also not-so-great sex. Consider what it was about those experiences that made it easy to want and enjoy sex. Then think about what slowed things down or got in the way. Yes, you'll have your own personal turn-offs, but there are other factors that affect your levels of desire – and some that, despite popular opinion, have little or no impact.

HORMONES

Sorry, but these probably aren't the reason for your lack of interest in sex. Research shows that less than 10% of women who experience difficulties with desire do so because of hormones.

MONOGAMY

Nope, it's probably not this, either. Some monogamous couples don't have great sex lives. Some monogamous couples *do*. The ones who do have two things in common: a strong friendship, and making sex a priority.

STRESS

About 80% of us find that stress, depression and anxiety can reduce our interest in sex (I call them 'flatliners'). Meanwhile, the rest of us find these issues actually *increase* our interest in sex ('redliners'). Although, interestingly, this increased interest doesn't tend to come with greater pleasure.

MOOD

Imagine you're feeling affectionate and flirty, and your certain special someone tickles you. This could potentially spell F-U-N. But if you're stressed and frustrated and the same thing happens, you might want him to LEAVE YOU THE HELL ALONE. Same sensation + different mindset = *totally* different experience. Mood *really* matters.

CULTURE

Did you grow up in a family that taught you sex is a beautiful, natural and healthy way to experience pleasure and affection? Me neither! If you learnt



**Yes, you're
normal.
He's normal.
And that's
normal
too'**

the potential barriers could be. And then plan for what you'll do if you encounter that barrier.

For example, if your worries about his expectations are interfering with your sexual desire, remove them by taking sex entirely off the table. Make a rule that for a month you won't touch each other below the waist, or even enjoy orgasms in front of each other (this is standard operating procedure for sex therapy). Instead, share pleasurable touching – kissing, cuddles, hugs –

without the risk of hitting your, 'What if this turns into sex I don't want?' brake.

Ironically, the potential barrier to making this plan work is that your body might start to wake up and think, 'Wow, this feels really good! I wonder if maybe we could break the rules, just this once?'

Hitting your sex accelerator

Women – or anyone – with less sensitive accelerators and more sensitive brakes are more likely to experience 'responsive' desire. This means that when your partner starts kissing your neck in a sensuous way, or nibbling your earlobe just how you like, your body thinks, 'Sex? That's a good idea!' This is different from 'spontaneous' desire, which seems to appear out of the blue, before anything apparently sexy is happening. Most of us will experience both spontaneous and responsive desire at different times in our lives. Unfortunately, many of us have been taught that spontaneous desire is the 'best' type – but responsive desire is just as normal and healthy.

I repeat: *you're normal*. Science says so. If any of this sounds like you, try shifting the focus away from trying to want sex, and pay attention to what kind of sensations you enjoy instead. You might find going slowly and building up to sex gradually with more affectionate touching works for you; in a healthy relationship, more affectionate touching can only be a *good* thing. The more you embrace pleasure and create contexts where pleasure can expand, the more desire will emerge all on its own. ♦

sex-negative messages, they'll have trained your brain to keep the brakes on all the time. But these messages can be unlearnt and replaced with healthier messages you choose yourself.

'SEXPECTATIONS'

Have you ever avoided even *kissing* your partner because you worry it'll create an expectation of sex? In this scenario, remove sex as an option so that you can enjoy touching – without the fear of disappointing if it doesn't lead to more.

Removing your brakes

So now you've identified what hits your brakes, how do you stop them interfering with your arousal? Pick something you can see is stopping you feeling full desire – whether it's your stress levels or the fact that he's majorly getting on your nerves right now – and make a specific, concrete plan for dealing with it. While you're coming up with your strategy, think through what

Summer LOVING...



Holidays, sunny days and balmy evenings... yes, summer is nearly here and, thanks to Durex, we've got some seriously scorching nights planned

Summer is finally on the way, and even if you're not planning a sunshine break, there's no shortage of opportunities to turn up the heat back home. With lighter evenings, more things to do at night and warmer weather, it's the perfect time to reconnect with your other half – and create some memories to make that summer glow last all year round...

Whether it's festivals, holidays or just a spot of alfresco fun, there's definitely something about summer that puts us all in the mood – so why not get your man on speed-dial and invite him over for a night of sizzling fun at yours?

If you – or him – are finding the weather a little too hot, then try starting your evening by cooling down together with a shower. The good news is that much of Durex's new range – such as its Exciting Touch Multifunctional Stroker and Thrilling

Touch Single Speed Stroker – is waterproof, so you'll soon find he's enjoying his shower a little more than normal... (you can thank Durex).

Or how about taking things outside? If you're lucky enough to know of a secluded spot of your own, get outdoors and enjoy some skin-on-skin alfresco action. Just make sure it's definitely private (getting arrested = definitely not sexy).

Already got your holiday booked? Why not use the opportunity to ramp up your relationship by bringing your favourite toys and unwinding – without worrying about nosy neighbours? Or if you fancy a mini-break closer to home, heading to a cosy, secluded hotel could be the recipe for the sexy pick-me-up you both need. A night or two away with your favourite toys (and boy) will provide a sensual scenario neither of you will forget in a hurry. Ready for one seriously sizzling summer?

With lighter evenings and warmer weather, it's the perfect time to reconnect

Ready, click... go!

Thanks to Durex's speedy, discreet delivery, a night of pleasure could be closer than you think. We love the Ultimate Pleasure Multifunctional Vibrating Stimulator, designed with increasing speeds and different sensual pulse patterns so you (or he) can find the perfect combination of pleasure. Whisper-quiet, this great toy was specifically designed for up to six hours of enjoyment. Or try our most powerful vibrating rabbit – the Ultimate Thrill Premium Rabbit, offering intensified vibrations for one seriously passionate 'out-of-control' body-shaking experience!





Sex therapy

For change-your-life sex advice, ask Cosmo's sex psychotherapist, **Rachel Morris**



What is it with men?

Why do men have to behave like such pigs? Every boyfriend I've ever had has cheated on me. I'm pretty and take care of my appearance, and when I love a man I give him everything. They should feel lucky to have me. Where am I going wrong?

I think it's important that you look at your selection criteria. What, apart from the philandering, do all of these men have in common? Do you tend to go for a particular 'type'? Where have you been meeting them – through friends? On dating sites or apps? In bars? What first attracted you to them and why do you think they were drawn to you? If you can identify a pattern emerging, you're halfway to solving the problem. If you want to meet men who behave like decent human beings, then you have to be prepared to open yourself up to new experiences and different types of people. Not all men behave like pigs, but the ones who do tend to congregate in the same pens.

Why don't I fancy this sex god?

I'm having the best sex of my life with a guy who adores me, but I just don't fancy him – how can that be? He has such a bad sex face I have to shut my eyes, but he is AMAZING in bed! I'm confused. We've been brainwashed by history – and Hollywood – to believe female desire is heart-led; that women who want sex for sex's sake must be sex addicts, sluts or desperate. Misogynistic twaddle. You're human and horny; he's adoring and attentive – it may be no more complicated than that. Your conscience is another matter. The explanation for this curious paradox may lie in the dynamic: you hold the cards and have nothing to lose; he's investing his all and is eager to please you.

Sex makes me anxious

I do everything I can to avoid sex with my boyfriend. I have low self-esteem and suffer from anxiety. I want to feel normal with him, but I freeze at his touch. Close your eyes and take deep, slow breaths. On each exhale, imagine your anxiety falling like the mercury on a thermometer and keep going until it's at zero. Anxiety is the body's natural response to fear; if it's allowed to build, it can paralyse us. Learn to control it and you'll have a shot at answering the real question: 'What am I afraid of?' Ask your GP for help with anxiety management and, for now, press pause on your sex life – forcing it is sure to make things worse.



She said I'm boring!

My girlfriend complained that I'm not very adventurous in bed. I was really upset and angry. I know I'm not Christian Grey, but it feels a bit harsh to be called boring. I don't know what she wants.

How do I make sex more 'exciting'?

Of course you don't know what she wants – she didn't tell you. She's either shy or she mistakenly thinks it's your job to up the ante. If you don't ask and decide to wing it, the chances of getting it right are slim and the risk of humiliation is high. She's 50% of this equation – tell her you want to change it up with her. Take three bits of paper each and write down things you'd like to try. Fold them up and number them one to six. Roll a dice and agree to try whatever number it lands on – that night.



CONTACT RACHEL

Write to: **RACHEL MORRIS**,
Cosmopolitan, 72 Broadwick Street,
London W1F 9EP
or email rachel@cosmopolitan.co.uk

**DID YOU KNOW
MANY WASHES
AREN'T MADE
WITH YOUR
INTIMATE PH
IN MIND?
LET'S DO SOMETHING
ABOUT IT.**



Sex, soap, even your period can throw off the pH of your intimate area. Vagisil pH Balance wash helps maintain a healthy intimate pH which helps reinforce your body's natural defenses. A balanced pH is an important step towards good daily intimate health.

VAGISIL pH BALANCE WASH **IN THE HEALTHCARE AISLE**

pH Balance
Intimate Wash
Helps support a
healthy pH balance
with Lactoferrin®
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Light & Fresh Scent

Health etc.



STRAIGHT UP

Backache caused by hunching over a computer all day isn't just painful – it can also lead to 4pm biscuit binges, because pain interferes with the hunger/satisfaction area of our brains.

The solution? Try to sit up straighter, walk around at least once an hour and take up yoga – it's a known back-pain reliever.

MOVING MEDITATION

Not keen to hop on the meditation bandwagon? Ten minutes of walking reduces anxiety too, say scientists at Queen's University. It's especially helpful for easing social anxiety – a quick walk around the block could be the cure for those pre-meeting nerves.



"I'VE LEARNT THAT IF YOU FEED YOUR BODY WITH THE RIGHT NUTRIENTS THEN YOU FEEL YOUR BEST AND YOU CAN BE YOUR BEST."

Miranda Kerr

BY TAYLOR ANDERSON. PHOTOGRAPHS GETTY, ISTOCKPHOTO



PRAWNS



SPINACH



AN INSOMNIA-BUSTING DINNER

ONE WEEK...

...is the length of time germs have been found to linger on aeroplane armrests and seat pockets. New holiday must-have: hand sanitiser.

30

...is how many extra minutes of physical activity you do every day if you get to work on public transport rather than drive.



GO GREEN

Green tea kills cancer cells in the mouth while leaving healthy cells alone, according to US scientists. Not a fan? Try Tetley's Blend Of Both – it has all the benefits of green tea but tastes just like a builder's brew.

★★★★★

WEIGHTLIFTING = FACE-LIFTING



Working out three times per week can help your skin look years younger, according to Canadian researchers. They found that exercise releases substances called myokines, which encourage cell renewal.

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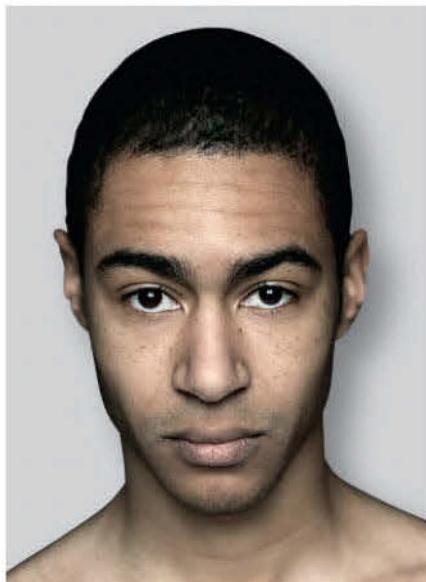
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Which of these is an abuser?

We never think of our best girlfriends as being anything but supportive, but that's not always the case...

Last year, Home Secretary Theresa May announced that 'coercive and controlling behaviour' in relationships was to become a legal offence – protecting women who are suffering emotional as well as physical abuse at the hands of their partner.

Signs of emotional abuse include put-downs, humiliation and embarrassment, use of sarcasm and

moodiness, guilt trips and isolation from friends and family – none of which leave a physical bruise, but can all have a catastrophic impact on a victim's confidence and well-being.

I was discussing the new law with my friend Amy*, a survivor of domestic abuse, and wondering how likely a person might be to spot signs of emotional manipulation. Some of them – such as a partner dissuading you from



meeting up with your friends in favour of spending more time with them – can be misinterpreted as ‘caring’.

“Yes, but if you think about it, your friend Steph* abused you emotionally for years,” Amy said. “You don’t have to be romantically involved with someone to experience that kind of thing.” Her words made me go cold – because I realised she was completely right.

As we chewed over the incidents that categorised my ‘friendship’ with Steph, it occurred to me that if a boyfriend had ever treated me as badly as she did, he would’ve been dumped in far less time than it took me to extract myself from her clutches.

Steph used to direct a constant barrage of thinly veiled insults and spiteful comments my way, always masked with a smile or followed by a hug. She could manipulate me into doing pretty much whatever she wanted, delighted in telling me that other people didn’t like me, and always tried to dominate social situations.

Shaken, I immediately texted five other friends to check I hadn’t invented

the whole thing. All responded with a variation on, ‘We never liked her, or the way she treated you, but we didn’t want to say anything’, which is a chilling echo of the sort of thing people say about friends’ abusive ex-partners.

I also remembered the time my friend Sally* confided in me about her own toxic friendship a few years ago. It was easy for me to see she was being emotionally abused, without noticing that I was in an almost identical situation – another echo of abuse in a relationship. It’s easy to excuse the behaviour of someone you love, whether it’s a friend or partner, even though you’d never tolerate your friends being treated the same way.

Of course, like most of us, I’m not comfortable thinking of myself as the sort of person who could become

someone’s emotional punchbag. Yet I also know it *can* happen to anyone. I tweeted a musing to that effect and it was immediately retweeted and favourited more than 100 times, suggesting I’m not alone in having been involved in an abusive friendship.

So what makes a relationship between friends turn toxic – and how do you avoid it?

“We tend to be drawn towards people who seem more confident or happier than we are – but although abusive people are often quite charming, they also tend to be incredibly insecure,” says Christine Northam from counselling service Relate. “Abusers tend to be attracted to qualities they admire in other people – ones they wish *they* had – and it’s ultimately jealousy that motivates their toxic behaviours, such as spiteful

*I don't like
to think of myself
as someone who could
become an emotional
punchbag... yet it
can happen to
anyone'*

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comments, mood swings and trying to control what the other person does."

Relationship expert Dr Pam Spurr adds that vulnerability can make you more likely to fall into a toxic friendship. "Often it's a case of their being drawn to us because they've got a radar for vulnerabilities, including low self-esteem," she says. "So-called 'frenemies' seek out people they feel they can control in some way."

Unfortunately, as we're constantly told friendships are more valuable than sexual relationships ('sisters before misters'), abandoning one can seem like a mark of personal failure. And dealing with someone who's a master of manipulation can be tricky too.

When I'd tried to address the unspoken tensions with Steph, she'd told me I was being so unreasonable that she'd stopped eating – a particularly harsh thing to say to a former bulimic like me. And when Sally tried to tackle her frenemy situation, she was met with a slew of abusive texts telling her what a terrible friend she was – putting the blame squarely on her shoulders (which

5 signs you're in a toxic friendship

We asked clinical therapist Caroline Carr to spell it out...

1 YOU DREAD SEEING

THEM "Does the sight of their name flashing up on your phone make your heart sink? Not wanting to see them is a key sign it's an unhealthy relationship."

2 THEY'RE JEALOUS OR POSSESSIVE

"If they quiz you on who you've been hanging out with, or make jibes about your 'other' friends, it's a

worrying sign of insecurity and possessiveness."

3 YOU ARGUE - A LOT

"Does everything end in an argument, no matter how ridiculous? Being with friends *shouldn't* feel like treading on eggshells – if it does, move on."

4 YOU FEEL UNDER PRESSURE

"Do you constantly feel like you're

disappointing them, or that you aren't able to be yourself when you're hanging out together? Maybe it's *their* problem, not yours."

5 THEY KEEP SCORE

"If they're competitive with you about everything from your salary and relationships to your clothes size – who needs friends like that?"

is – surprise! – another classic tactic of emotional abuse).

Eventually, I realised the only person who could change my situation was me. So now, Steph and I see each other occasionally through mutual acquaintances, but don't spend time together one-on-one. Sally, meanwhile, reached a point where the arrival of a text from her 'best friend' was making

her feel sick – so she simply started ignoring them completely.

Unless both parties are willing to fix things, it could be that the only real solution is to find the strength to move on. Friendships should always enhance our lives, and if they don't, there's no shame in walking away. In the words of Dr Pam, "You always have a choice. Believe you can do better." ♦

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Bye-bye body hang-ups

Dr Linda Papadopoulos unravels the causes of poor body image

THE DILEMMA

I hate being tall!

QI'm 6ft 2ins tall, and while I'm fit and healthy, I sometimes feel awkward and ungainly when I'm with other women who are shorter and more petite. Also, I don't want to feel like my choice of potential partners is limited to guys taller than myself, but when I've been out with shorter men it seems inevitable that we'll be subjected to 'amused' looks. I know I shouldn't be bothered by what other people think but it knocks my confidence, and it can't be great for the man either. How can I appreciate my height?

AAmong the toughest challenges we face can be simply learning to feel good about ourselves. One way to boost confidence is to do activities that take advantage of your height – sports or dancing, for example. Remember feeling competent builds confidence. It's also really important not to compare yourself with others – believe me, for every tall girl who wishes she was smaller there's a petite girl wishing she was taller. And as far as having a shorter boyfriend goes, the idea that the guy has to be taller than the girl is becoming ever more outdated – just look at the red carpets in Hollywood. (And



Casting for the *Usual Suspects* reboot wasn't going well

don't forget there are plenty of owning-it tall women out there such as Taylor Swift, Sophie Dahl and Karlie Kloss.) We're all looking for a relationship where we feel valued, respected and loved. If you find someone who does that and he's shorter than you, who cares!

Like it or not, as a tall girl you *will* get attention. Strangers will notice you. Embrace it. When you enter a room, do it with confidence – that way when people stare it won't be because of your height but because of the fabulous, positive way you present yourself.

SELF-HELP CORNER

Embrace: My Story From Body Loather To Body Lover by Taryn Brumfitt (£14.99, New Holland)

'Body confidence does not come from trying to achieve the perfect body, it comes from embracing the one you've already got.' This great book was written with honesty and poignancy by a woman who took control of her body image, moving from self-loathing to self-acceptance and love – a lesson for all of us.



RETWEET THIS WANT A POSITIVE, HAPPY THOUGHT TO SHARE ON TWITTER? DR LINDA'S INSPIRATIONAL WORDS WILL HELP...



Linda Papadopoulos @DrLinda_P

Don't be afraid of challenges – the only way to truly increase confidence and to grow is through being stretched #CosmosDrLinda

5 FOODS THAT MAKE YOU SMARTER



Brussels sprouts

Not everyone's favourite, but they're packed with diindolylmethane, an immune-system booster that protects brain cells.



Apples

Apples contain catechins – which could protect us from everyday brain-damaging chemicals.



Kale

Yes, it's a bit of a fad, but for good reason – a recent study found that eating it lowered brain age by one to two years.



Eggs

Free-range eggs contain lots of brain-protecting fatty acids, and yolks help neurotransmitters.



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My body's amazing because...

ZOE SMITH, 20, FROM LONDON, IS A GOLD-MEDAL-WINNING WEIGHTLIFTER

I started weightlifting when I was just 12. I was training in gymnastics at the time, but I wasn't sure I had what it takes to be a professional; I was a bit too timid. So my coach suggested I try out for the gym's weightlifting team, as they were looking for a girl to compete at the London Youth Olympics.

My family and friends weren't convinced it was the right thing for me at first – they assumed I'd bulk up – but I took to it like a duck to water and, a few months later, entered my first under-17s competition, where I won gold, beating a girl five years my senior. I was elated. Competing at something I knew I could win felt so empowering.

After being talent-spotted when I was 16 by the governing body British Weightlifting (BW), I decided to pursue it full-time rather than taking my A-levels. But later that year, my funding was cut – BW said I was too heavy for the category I was training to lift in. When the press got hold of the story, they ran headlines like, '*Too Fat For Funding!*' It was a horrible time, but I tried not to take it to heart and focused on pulling myself back up again. I worked hard and proved I was serious, and my funding was reinstated two months later.

At the London 2012 Olympics I broke the British record for the clean-and-jerk lift, then last year I won gold at the Commonwealth Games. It was such an intense experience – I felt completely overwhelmed.

My body is the thing that's got me where I am. My favourite part is my legs – they're where my power comes from, and they allow me to lift two-and-three-quarter times my own weight. Like every girl, I have days when I don't love what I see in the mirror, but my confidence comes from keeping myself healthy and fit, and from knowing I can get up on a platform, use all my training and allow my body to perform to the best of its ability. When I'm in the flow and my body's doing its thing, competing feels great.

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Ask Irma

She's the world's best agony aunt and is here for you when your friends can't be



I love my best friend

I have a male best friend and we get on so well. Somehow we recently ended up sleeping together. Things were awkward between us for a few weeks and we agreed it shouldn't have happened. The problem is I'm totally in love, and I think he is too but afraid to say so. I want to be more than just friends, but fear I've ruined things by saying it was a mistake. Great partnerships begin after the blaze of sex has settled into life-warming friendship. But a friendship can become too hot to handle if the sexy blaze is lit. You now need to talk, as only friends can do together. Let him know your sexual encounter didn't ruin the old friendship for you; it only added another dimension. Listen quietly when he replies. If he doesn't respond to your feelings, it'd be wise for you to draw back gently and temporarily until your emotions cool, freeing you for new friends – male and female – and a new, undreamt-of future.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"The best thing to do," says my favourite geek whenever I complain to him about yet another problem with my computer, "is shut it down, go away and make yourself a cup of tea. Then start it up again – chances are it'll be fine." His suggestion works so well for my laptop that I've found myself applying the same idea to moods and problems in daily life.

It's too late to go back

Until recently I was engaged to a guy. I knew he cheated on me but I loved him anyway. Then a colleague made me feel amazing – so much so, I moved out of the house I shared with my fiancé. Recently I've been arguing with the new guy and feel I've made a huge mistake. But I can't go back as my ex has someone new and his family hate me. Falling madly in love with a convenient number two when things are bumpy with live-in number one is a classic. And it almost always proves a hopeless escape route from facing the music with number one. Had you tackled problems with your fiancé – his cheating, for example – maybe you two could have saved the relationship together. It's too late for that, but not for you to deal at last with your fear of discovering who you are when without a partner. Who we are, and who we want to be, is the person we must live with happily before we can live happily with any other.

He kissed a girl...

Without permission I read my boyfriend's Facebook messages and found out he kissed a girl back when we first started dating. What's more, he sent a message to another girl before we got together, spilling his heart out about wanting to be with her – but he always tells me, "I can't do the sappy feelings thing." Do I confront him?

Why worry that he kissed someone after you started dating? A kiss is just a kiss. As for the other girl, evidently she hurt him and, as men will do, he disguised his pain by scorning the feelings that caused it. It takes time for trust (not in you; in his own 'sappy' feelings) to build again. Meanwhile, privately face up to your own mistrust in yourself and the relationship. (Or why snoop on his messages?) Then learn more about – and learn to trust – each other. The day can come when you can laugh together at old suspicions.

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THE Quick Vit GUIDE

Taking vitamin or mineral supplements might seem like a healthy choice, but many experts argue that if you eat a wide variety of healthy foods, there's no point. So we asked Catherine Price, author of new book *The Vitamin Complex*, when we should POP – and when we should NOT...



POP

IF YOU'RE PREGNANT (OR WANT TO BE) **Folate or folic acid** (what it's called when it's man-made) is essential for any woman pre-pregnancy, as low levels of this increase the risk of birth defects. "Most defects of the brain and spine occur during the really early stages of pregnancy," Catherine says. So pop 400mcg of folic acid daily when you're trying for a baby and during the first three months.

DON'T POP

WHEN YOU'RE IN AN AWFUL MOOD Rather than resorting to a few glasses of Shiraz or a tub of Chunky Monkey, many people tackle a low mood with the herbal treatment **St John's Wort**. The problem is it also interacts with more than half of all prescription drugs – in particular, the Pill. So unless your GP has confirmed it won't interfere with any other medication you might be on, make Brazil nuts part of your daily diet – just three a day provide your recommended allowance of selenium, a deficiency of which has been linked to increased risk of depression and anxiety.

POP

IF YOU'RE VEGGIE

When you eat meat, fish and dairy, **vitamin B12** and **iron** aren't really things you need to worry about; your diet supplies more than enough. But vegetarians or people who eat very few animal products are a different story; they often *do* need vitamin B12 and iron tablets, as these are the key nutrients that keep your cells healthy and happy. "And consider an iron supplement if you have very heavy periods," advises Catherine.

DON'T POP

WHEN YOU'VE GOT A COLD

The first sign of a cold = stock up on **vitamin C** pills, right? Sorry, but you're wasting your time (and cash). "Vitamin C supplements aren't dangerous, but they haven't been shown to prevent colds," Catherine says. "That fact is most of us get plenty of vitamin C naturally from our diets if we regularly eat foods such as oranges, lemons, broccoli, kiwi fruit and tomatoes."

TALK TO YOUR GP!

Telling your doctor what supplements you're taking is incredibly important, says Catherine. "Even run-of-the-mill vitamins and minerals can interact with medications."

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Taylor Anderson, will quiz our panel of experts to find out...
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✓ How to get press coverage
✓ How to build a social-media following
✓ Where to find clients ... and more!

THE PANEL WILL INCLUDE...



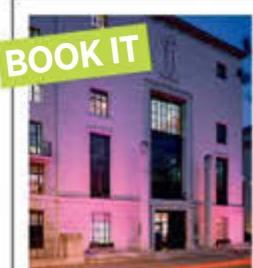
MADELEINE SHAW, nutrition coach

With a successful website and recipe book under her belt, Madeleine's 'get the glow' philosophy of eating real, healthy food has taken the health world by storm. No wonder Millie Mackintosh loves her.



NIKKI COOPER, founder of Inner Me

supplements Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at the age of 28, Nikki threw herself into researching health as a way to heal. Uninspired by the supplements available, she started own business, Inner Me.



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Mallorca

Rapidly catching up with glam neighbouring island Ibiza, Mallorca is firmly on our radar this year. Magaluf is the heart of the action, with clubs such as Banana Disco, Boomerang and Tokio Joe's pulling in thousands.

However it's the opening of BH Mallorca (Bhmallorca.com) that excites us: a new hotel in Magaluf with suites for sharing with friends, the world's first over-18s water park, beach club and open-air stage (David Guetta will be headlining on 21 August). We'll also be luxing it up at day-to-night club Nikki Beach (Nikkibeach.com), which features a White Celebration - where everyone must wear top-to-toe white - on 4 June and a Superhero Party on 5 July.

Ibiza

The Balearic isle is still No.1 for hedonism and *sound the klaxon* - it's opening-party time this month! Join in the fun at Sankeys (20 May), Ocean Beach Ibiza (22 May), Zoo (27 May) and Circo Loco at DC-10 (25 May). Our fave club, Pacha, owns Thursdays in summer with F*** Me I'm Famous (opening 28 May), while Space is not to be missed on Sundays and Together at Amnesia on Tuesdays, with Chase & Status among others. This year we'll also be taking in a Cirque de la Nuit boat party (Cirquedelanuitibiza.com) at Playa d'en Bossa, pool partying at Ushuaïa (Ushuaiaibiza.com) and booking early for Ibiza Rocks' 10th Birthday Party on 22 July, headlined by The Libertines (Ibizarocks.com). Pick up fab beachwear at White-ibiza.com.

The rooftop at Pangea



Marbella

Marbs (the Spanish equivalent of St Tropez, only with a lot more clubs) is still a Euro hot spot thanks to Puerto Banús' super-clubs such as Tibu Banus and Aqwa Mist (try talking your way into the VIP area which has a hot tub!). For pre-clubbing drinks we love Pangea for its amazing views (who can resist cocktails beneath the stars on a rooftop?), and after a week of clubbing there's nothing better than chilling on an oversized white circular lounger by the pool at Ocean Club Marbella. Don't miss a stroll around the marina to check out the millionaires' super-yachts, and check in at Sisu Boutique Hotel and Day Club (Sisuboutique.com) from £58 per night in June, where there's lots going on: pool parties, DJs, large screens and a VIP area overlooking all the action.

Where's the PARTY?

If dancing till dawn is part of your plan this summer, here's where Cosmo will be watching the sun rise

An opening party at Ushuaïa



Croatia

Each year Croatia's party scene grows. Zrce Beach at Novalja (Pag Island) is where it's at, with clubs such as Papaya packing in the clubbers and DJs. Key dates include Spring Break Croatia (3-7 June), Fresh Island Festival (hip hop; R&B, 15-17 July) and Sonus (techno, 16-20 August). We'll also be booking the Electric Elephant (9-13 July) for boat parties, DJ Andrew Weatherall and dancing all night at open-air clubs (tickets £130, Electricelephant.co.uk). But most exciting is Together Travel's (Together.travel/croatia/sailing) week-long clubbing cruise (30 August-6 September) from £430pp.



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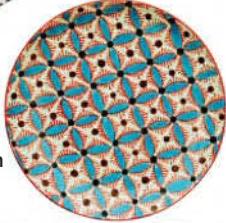
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Use pattern to pep up your pad

BLOWOUT
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Occa-Home



Plate,
£7, John
Lewis



Armchair, £599,
Harveys



Storage boxes, £32 for set
of three, Debenhams



Rug, £465, Calligaris



Pouffe,
£175, Loaf



Jug, £26,
Berry Red



Basket,
£50, Habitat

BUDGET
Treat your wallet



Cushion, £15,
Sainsbury's



Plate,
£3.50,
Sainsbury's



Rug, £225, Plantation
Rug Company



Pouffe, £62,
Littlewoods



Vase,
£45,
Drift
Living



Basket,
£30, Tesco
Direct

Seeing double

What's black and white and only £5?



Cushion, £5,
Tesco Direct



Cushion, £119 for two, Black
Orchid Interiors



Storage boxes, £9.99 for
set of three, Dunelm

Cosmostrology

With Cosmo's psychic astrologer **Jessica Adams**

Taurus 20 APR-20 MAY

Don't deepen a money issue by adding more drama. New interests will take over your life and lead you to meet an intriguing man. Why not offer your skills on a project outside work? It could improve your CV. A male relative will finally start to see a situation clearly.

Gemini 21 MAY-20 JUN

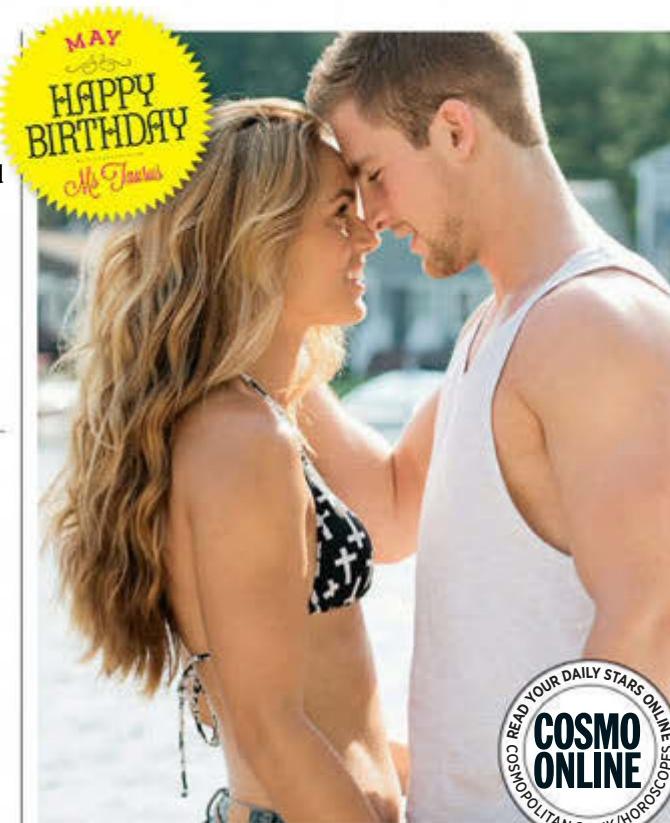
Your former, current or potential partner needs careful handling. Brilliant team players make a group project take off. Find out why a woman has been so secretive. With the help of a patient teacher, you'll learn the ropes in an interesting skill. Say yes to an offer to get back to nature.

Cancer 21 JUN-22 JUL

Put your body first and seek health advice. A wonderful trip to a special location will see you returning there for years to come. You'll receive money or other benefits as a reward for your time and energy. Accept the inevitable with a friend – the time has come for change and you must let go.

Leo 23 JUL-22 AUG

A hard decision about your love life brings relief once you've made it. Stunning options related to travel, moving or work with a foreign connection will only come once. A family member needs help with a burden. Carry on with that demanding project as it will bring long-term benefits.



Virgo 23 AUG-22 SEP

Try not to exacerbate a challenging situation at home. Amazing co-operation makes a work project very special and one male will become a lifelong contact. Reassure a female friend that the situation is not personal. Say yes to a wise financial or business offer now.

Libra 23 SEP-22 OCT

The internet is demanding too much from you, so think twice before you add to that burden. Fantastic people from your past will return and point you in a new direction. Find out more about one man's ex as she has wisdom to pass on. Celebrate amazing results with a family member.

Scorpio 23 OCT-21 NOV

Keep a financial decision as simple as you can and do not take on more than you can afford. You will be thrilled by a work offer from a woman; it will allow you to prove what you can do. Say yes to advantages that only come from being in your family or household.

Sagittarius 22 NOV-21 DEC

Image or reputation issues should be managed with great care now, and if you want to tone up or change your appearance, do your homework. Fabulous social events and hot tickets have a European connection. Buy your way out of one situation where money fixes the problem.

Capricorn 22 DEC-19 JAN

Don't try to hide anything from other people as it may become known to them later. Fantastic new ideas for your hair, face, shape and style will come from an older person and cost you nothing. A board or committee member will step down and this will affect your life for the better.

Aquarius 20 JAN-18 FEB

Do not get in any deeper with a group that's already causing you issues. Find out what you have to gain from an intriguing advertisement. Stunning options for your house or flat will help with a summer decision. A woman who wants a 50-50 arrangement with you needs a closer look.

Pisces 19 FEB-19 MAR

Make a career decision very carefully as it will have an impact on 2016. Wonderful new sexual options will help you discover what you want. Trust a woman who knows you extremely well when you need advice about a man. Why back down on an issue you believe in? Stand firm.

Aries 20 MAR-19 APR

Research a holiday very carefully before you commit. When asked to make an important choice this month, request the freedom to change your mind. A man who has issues with his mother needs a good listener. Fantastic favours and free offers make the third week of the month fun.

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Spring essentials



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Periods. Every. Single. Time

Do they have some kind of app that tells them when we've planned a wedding/holiday/night of hot sex? Can they detect when we're wearing white jeans? It's uncanny.

Rain

You could be in the middle of the longest drought on record, but get yourself a spray tan before a night out and it's more effective than any rain dance.



MIRRORS

HEADING TO THE LADIES' AFTER A BIG JOB INTERVIEW WILL INEVITABLY REVEAL LIPSTICK ON YOUR TEETH AND A FALSE EYELASH PERCHING ON YOUR CHEEK LIKE A MALEVOLENT SPIDER.

Crashes

You're about to press 'send' on the report that's taken the best part of a week (and most of your sanity). Of course your computer crashes. Of course the document's 'disappeared'. Of course you didn't back up your work.

Developing an enoromo-zit

You're way past the spotty teen stage, right? WRONG. Scorching first date on the horizon = Vesuvius-like spot erupting through the surface of your face. Thanks, skin.

Sales

Facebook's targeted ads have an amazing (-ly terrible) knack of alerting you to those expensive boots you bought two days ago, now 50% off. Helpful.

Good-looking guys hitting on you

OK, so maybe it is because you're radiating an inner-goddess-like confidence, but men only expressing an interest in you the second you land a boyfriend is actually a massive pain in the arse.

SPLURGES

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